

EXCLUSIVE How Stephen Harper got in the way of Conservative success



MACLEAN'S

JUNE 27 2005

KILLER TANS

Damn the health risks—kids want the look

POLLY SHANNON

HITTING IT BIG AFTER MAGGIE TRUDEAU

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"What led to Jackson's acquittal is the fact that he's a celebrity like O.J. and Robert Blake. That excuses virtually any form of conduct, and that is a crime." —**Ed MacGowan**, Victoria

Alberta bound

So "Alberta is about to get wildly rich and powerful" (Covey, June 13). And Quebec is still going strong testament, while Atlantic Canada keeps money royalties and Ontario complains about all those lovely spunky wheels? This sounds like a nightmare for Canada. New story reminded me of so-called semi-autonomous units in business. My company used to do semi-autonomous approach for many years. Unfortunately, that started huge political infighting among units. The same thing is happening to Canada.

Andrew Klein, Vancouver, B.C.

The Alberta tar sands are considered to be a profitable venture, as long as the cost of producing the oil is less than the current market price. But the oil companies do not include the environmental cost of the huge lakes of sludge that are poisoning the local land and water for centuries to come. Are the oil sands profitable when we include the cost of cleaning up the landscape? Alberta may inherit billions of dollars in the next few decades, but all Canadians will inherit the cost of the environmental cleanup.

Bob McGowan, Toronto, B.C.

The notion of Steve Nash's story gives all Canadians plenty of food for thought. To the countless threat of Quebec separation may soon be added a charged refrain led by Alberta: "The West wants out, or in" is Canada, as we currently know it, becoming ungovernable from the centre?

Nigel Kelly, Courtenay, B.C.

Message to Michael

I was appalled at Barbara Ansel's callous dismissal of the pain and confusion that Michael Jackson's alleged sexual abuse caused his young victims ("In the grip of predators," Society, June 13). She actually wrote, "But in the absence of violence, fear and physical coercion, what actual harm has he done?" Can the be someone "No physical harm, no fear?"

David Smith, Vancouver



In spite of Barbara Ansel's description of Michael Jackson as an adolescent boy who giggles over puns and experiments with his sexuality, at the end of the day he is not a 12-year-old. He is a middle-aged man who apparently chose to make his own bed.

Jay Goertz, St. Catharines, Ont.

In Ansel's first article for Maclean's since her husband Conrad Black's spectacular resignation and ongoing tribulations, the reporter is contrite with the embarrased Michael Jackson. Writing about thoughts of a rich vulnerable person bringing out the jaded in a lot of people is no doubt close to the bone for Ansel.

Tom Bayle, Kam, Ont.

I've been to come across someone who has the courage to write the truth. I wish the public would quit being so hypocritical. Here is

APOLOGY

An article titled "Novel Nations" in the Maclean's special issue *Landscapes and Dreams*, published in October 2000, included some material on the evaluation of the short story in Canada that should have been attributed to Gerald Lynch, author of an entry covering that subject in the *Encyclopedia of Literature in Canada*. Maclean's apologizes to Prof. Lynch for the unfortunate oversight.

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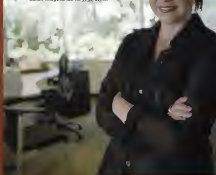
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MACLEAN'S 100

THE MAIL

A team from Washington put so many years ago, and new people than has out of fear of being associated with child molesters. What Jackson may have done is nothing compared to what we have done, discussed every aspect of his life and ridiculed him. *Shirley Gerstweyer, Grande Prairie, Alta.*

Twisting the Sisters

Regarding the Hasking story on the *Sisters of Charity of Ontario* ("Old habits, new news," June 6) the error, Barbara Madsen, calls the Sisters a disordered order. On the contrary, they were founded to take care of the rich, the needy and the poor, and they were once known mainly as a teaching order. *Pierre Berth, Belle River, Ont.*

More on computers in class

As an educator of some years, I won't be labouring this point: technology is here to stay ("How computers made our kids stupid," Cover, June 6). Technology is merely a tool, which can enlighten, complicate, fascinate, extend and encourage learning. It is nothing more or less. Let's look to ensuring that our teachers know how to make the best use of the best tool at their disposal. *Colleen Stirling, Fort Frances, Ont.*

My Ma married into the Macleans of the front cover story "How Computers make our kids stupid." But then I saw he is on the outside look for a computer software company that says "learn something doesn't." After reading that too, who, she doesn't say in which about my computer type. Pretty good first step (13-year-old kid, huh)? *Matt Kankard, Fort Langley, B.C.*

No morals in today's TV world

When I read Ann Denner-Johnston's June 6 column "Where are the real women?", I wondered why she degraded family television shows of the '50s and '60s. At least they contained morality and principles, as sadly lacking in today's TV world. "Thankful," in the 36 years since the *Brady Bunch* first aired, she admits, "family life has developed a few new plot twists and acts, too, has television." Yes, she has sex, drugs, violence and divorce, the latter not necessarily a source of joy for the children involved. *N.A. Downey, Ottawa*

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UPFRONT



Cambodia | A ransom drama claims a Canadian toddler

He was shot and killed, some reports said, so show that the hostage-takers were serious—and for crying. But what do you expect from a two-year-old when confronted by eyes with guns while his mother was held to ransom by their demands? That Victoria-born Muslim Michael was the only victim in the Sihanouk International School in Cambodia, where his father worked in a nearby resort, was pure luck (a first-year-old girl from Quebec was right beside him). The six or seven who took the five teachers and 36 students hostage for over six hours were met to be willing to kill a child at a time and a place where their almost laughably low rent demands a few hundred dollars, an AK 47 rifle, some shotgun, grenade launchers and the gear in which they were captured as police stormed in. It seems money may not have been the primary motive, the 23-year-old engineer is said to have gone looking for the Korean children of his former em-

ployer, whom he had a falling-out, seeking revenge.

In any event, the incident in Cambodia was the most gruesome in a week when hostage dramas appeared to be happening all over the world. In strife-riven Haiti, 65-year-old Magistrate Gaudet (in Montreal was released by kidnappers after about four days and, it's believed, the payment of a ransom as high as US\$300,000 to Magdoff, Iraq soldiers robbing a Saudi oilrig and a stranded Australian engineer Douglas Wood, who had been held hostage for six weeks. Wood's discovery brings to the murder of Western hostages who've been freed in Iraq in the past month, suggesting the net might be tightening on the criminal gangs who kidnap foreigners and threaten them to the highest bidders.

ScoreCard

GOON HOCKEY
Scott finds new low as Rattle of the Hockey Enthusiasts books also Prince George, B.C., arena in August. Event has aging hockey fans staying in it in full gear. All but work no game, no puck—and, mercifully, no sticks after all, it's a family affair.

OUR MAN IN SYRIA
Cynical middle-aged ambassador Franco Amadio says he had no idea neo-conservative Syrian regime was torturing imprisoned Canadian Maher Arar. Perhaps diplomacy is no education needed—say it's cable in the sure of Arar's three-to-six-for-life offer.

HONRY PACIFISTS
Peacebots in Marin County, Calif., say cops are taking their expression by firing missiles who look in support of anti-war vigil. Residents say home violence may be down, soon new cases vowing continued. If pacifists declare the peace, are they still pacifists?

BEAUTIFUL LOSER
Gamewatching robber at Louisa's hockey college is whapped by students using curling rods. Extreme makeover follows suspect hospitalized, but lucky to be alive. No appointment? No tip? Could have been fatal.

From Our Pages will return next week.





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WORLD

EARTHQUAKES California was jolted by four significant quakes within weeks—twice in the south and Los Angeles, and two others off its northern coast. No serious injuries were reported. The quakes ranged from 4.9 to 7.2 on the Richter scale, and the largest one prompted a tsunami warning—nothing came of it—that reached as far north as B.C.

WATER DIVERSION North Dakota's state determined to go ahead with its controversial water diversion scheme in early July despite renewed objections from Canada and even from the White House. Designed to alleviate summer flooding in a northern part of the state, the project has angered ranch-owning Manitobans and Minnesotans, which argue the diversion will bring flooding plains, fish and pollutants into their waterways.

CELEBRITY JUSTICE A shaken Michael Jackson walked out of a California courtroom a free man, acquitted of plying a 13-year-old boy with alcohol and sexually molesting him. His lawyer said the 46-year-old pop star promises to keep his badboys to him self in the future, so he will never again be vulnerable to these kinds of charges. Some jurors said afterward they felt Jackson's behavior was wrong, but that there was not evidence to convict him. He may still face a civil suit, where the burden of proof tends to be lower. From the family of the boy.

BY GEORFF OLSON



THE GOOD DOCTOR

He's no shrink, but sometimes even it, for his beauty, to fast, Dr. Henry Morgenthau has spent literally half a lifetime challenging authority—whether, at U.S. in a good number of years. So the old but encouraging to hear him tell graduates of the University of Western Ontario that civil disobedience is not the way to go. But Canada is a quasi-democracy that can be battered from within. Not that Morgenthau for his mother. With the crisis driven over NATO's decision is passing him on, however, a doctor—where 12,000 people signed his petition in Boston, U.S. and another request, while a 12 million donation was withdrawn—he took aim at his critics, Canada's open access to abortion, which he pioneered with his memoirs, drama and which the Supreme Court upheld, has made the lot of women, and society, much safer, he argued. "Red-headed children," he said, "grow into adults who do not build concentration camps."



CONVICTS Chinese bloggers have shown their words carefully. Microsoft is helping Beijing censor posters on MSN's Chatting language website who use certain words such as democracy, human rights and Taiwan independence. The words prompt a warning that their use is prohibited.

Meanwhile, two Chinese defectors, former diplomats in Australia, said the Chinese government operates an espionage network—upwards of 1,000 spies in Canada alone—to keep tabs on the Italian Gang's special movement and related commercial secrets.

RAK The historic trial of former Klamath and preacher Edgar Ray Kyles, 80, for the

1961 murders of three civil rights workers in Mississippi, began with some history in the morning, as the trial resumed, the U.S. Senate formally apologized for its failure to stop the lynching of nearly black people between 1881 and 1944. Days later, as testimony was to begin, Kyles, whose earlier murder trial was postponed with jury pay, was carried from court on a stretcher, suffering from high blood pressure.

WITCHHUNT A leaked report from London's Metropolitan Police said some African children are being smuggled into Britain and used in human sacrifices as part of a devil-worshiping ritual. The Met has two cases it's been investigating closely, but said as part of its inquiries it has documented nearly 300 African children whose whereabouts in Britain cannot be accounted for.

STANDBY Mexican soldiers and federal police were patrolling the volatile border town of Nuevo Laredo after a drug gang gunned down the town's new police chief just hours after he took office, and after the local force fired on federal officers who arrived to investigate. On the border with Texas, Nuevo Laredo is a hot spot in a drug war that has seen at least 600 Mexicans killed this year.

SCHMIDT Terri Schiavo had severe, irreversible brain damage and was totally blind when she died in March after 15 years on life support, in autopsy found. The last days of the 41-year-old Florida woman transfused U.S. courts and politicians as her parents and

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Mansbridge on the Record



MUST-SEE DESTINATIONS

One lifetime isn't long enough to visit all of the world's extraordinary places

IT'S THAT TIME of year when many of us decide it's time to travel and see the country or the world. Two of the top books on America's travel bestseller list challenge us to get moving and do just that. Recently, Number 1 was *1,000 Places to See Before You Die*, while further down the list sat *Unforgettable Places to See Before You Die*. Now that's pressure. All I could think of when I first read those titles, especially the first, is that I'd better get my five-year-old son onto a plane soon—larger school, he's going to have to get used to a dozen of those places each year for the rest of his life to stand any chance of finishing the list.

The other day I was sitting next to an Air Canada flight attendant on her way to St. John's, Nfld. (Myra produced *1,000 Places to See* by veteran American travel writer Patricia Schultz—just to see what all the fuss was about, and I proceeded to plug it on the airplane. Before I could even open it, my neighbour said, "That's a great book—I've read it." Hence, who gets five flights on her own airline and more on its partner airlines all over the world—the man here has to let of the 1,000 places already. But I was wrong. "You'd need more than one life to do that," she explained. If a flight attendant can't do it, who can?

I'm lucky I've seen a lot of the world already. But none of what a journalist takes in doesn't qualify as "enlightening." It comes over, when it comes to Canada, I've done all right. As one who firmly believes in knowing your own country first, I've been to every province and territory,

almost every city, and hundreds of small towns along the way. And I still get excited. In the past week, I was back in Calgary, which has to be one of the world's fastest-growing cities. One hundred years ago there were barely 10,000 brave souls huddled on the banks of the Bow River; now there are more than a million, and budding they are not. Now humans seem to pop up overnight as the city keeps pushing westward toward the Rockies. And those residents never disappoint—driving through them left me, as it always does, pondering the question "What force must have occurred to create this sight?" My destination was Banff, which happens to be the first Canadian location listed in Schultz's book: "surprisingly stylish considering its wilderness location." I was going there for a conference for perhaps the 10th time—which sounds great, but it's awfully hard to concentrate on anything, especially a conference agenda, with the rugged beauty of the place swirling back at you from every vantage point.

From Alberta, I took that flight I was just mentioning to Newfoundland. It was for a charity event I try to make each year, partly because I believe in the cause—literacy—and partly because I can never get enough of St. John's. South coast, I'm sure, but I still drive up to the top of Signal Hill every year, just to try to capture some of that Maroon spirit.

Of the 1,000 places around the world I've been told I should see before my time is up, 34 are in Canada. Not bad, I guess. So far, I've seen 24. As with any list, one can quibble about what's included and what isn't, and I certainly would with this one. But still, it's a challenge, and I'd like to be able to say I've seen them all. So, with summer now open as it's time to add a few more.

Patricia Schultz is a Chief Correspondent of CBC Television News and Author of *The National's* co-author: *1000 Places to See*.

Passages

THIRD He said he was the fastest man in the world, then proved it. Jamaica's Asafa Powell, 32, set a new world record—9.77 seconds—in a nearly 100-metre sprint in Athens. He ragged by the old record of 9.78 seconds set in 2002 by American Tim Montgomery, whom U.S. doping officials want banned for life for alleged drug violations.

DIED He was one of Canada's best story tellers, whether the tale was Greg Gifford, royal visits or the assassination of JFK. A little wonder where songwriter Neil Young gets his ideas? Scott Young, the pragmatic former sports columnist, Maclean's writer and author—over 40 books, including mysteries and the book's chosen Scripps in St. John's and a Bay at the Lady Camp—died in Kingston, Ont., at 87.

CONVICTED A Gosselin teen living in small town Petrolia, Ont., was found guilty of plotting to blow up his school after a bomb making chemical in his room and wires told he had made an American assassin. He then spent four years in a youth facility and earned a medal from the U.S. when he was in "Teen Gosselin" film. It's not a teen picture.

RETIRED B.C. born slugger Larry Walker said this could be his last year in pro ball because his 38 year old body is wearing down. The one-time National League MVP will definitely retire if he's Los Angeles' World Series, but because of injuries he might go even if they don't. Walker's career came down when he said he could be his last step to Toronto to play the five days.

DIED Percy and Florence Arrowood of Haverhill, England, set the record earlier this month for having the world's longest recorded marriage. Percy died last week, at 103, his wife of 84 years by his side.



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MAGAZINE | JUNE 25, 2005 | 13

SUMMERTIME BLUES

After their bad spring, it's time for Stephen Harper and the Tories to regroup. JOHN GEDDES reports.

STEPHEN HARPER is in trouble. On that, a wide spectrum of Conservatives agree, though they disagree over what and how deep. Among Tory MPs, the prevailing view is that their leader suffers from a persistent, but superficial, image problem. With the House likely to wrap up this week, they're hoping Harper's plan to tour the country and dip plenty of buckets during the summer break will boost his appeal. But among some rights-of-centre activists, it's Harper's devotion to loose policies and willingness to convey them to

Canadians that's seen as faltering. Their as-solicited advice: worry less about attacking Liberal corruption and more about selling core Conservative principles—the sort of serious stuff that can be tough to dig into conversation when you have an oversized spatula in your hand.

Into this debate over what Harper must do to bounce back in the polls comes a new book—the kind that poses for dock chair reading among politics addicts. William Johnston's *Stephen Harper and the Future of Canada* is an unabashed, 418-page fan letter. But while the author doesn't hide his admiration for his subject, this biography is thorough enough to illuminate Harper's faults even as it fo-

QUESTIONS are being raised about his adherence to basic Conservative principles and ability to sell them

cus on his strengths. Along with being a veteran political columnist, Johnston is an English-language rights activist in Quebec. So it's no surprise that he devotes a lot of attention to Harper's stance on Quebec during the constitutional woes of the 1990s. In fact, Johnston was so impressed by Harper's demands during the 1995 referendum for stronger conditions before secession could be considered, that he credits him with having shown "better judgment in addressing the issue of secession than any other politician."

Yet if Johnston saw Harper as a true conviction politician a decade ago—and still does today—other observers aren't so sure. John Williamson, federal director of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, a non-partisan lower-cost advocacy group, blames Harper's Conservatives for wanting down key positions in recent months, when it looked like the Liberal minority might fall in the wake of new revelations on Justice John Gomersley's sponsorship inquiry. "They were so fixated on winning an election on Gomery that policies began to erode un-noticed," Williamson charges.

He complains that the Tories have zoned a recent spree of Liberal spending promises that he estimated at \$26 billion. On the government's policy that will pump \$5 billion of gas tax money over five years to municipal governments, Williamson gapes at the Conservatives have promised not to alter the plan—except perhaps to spend more. Similarly, he faults the Conservatives for edging too close to the government on issues such as child care and Kyoto, although in both these cases Tories claim their positions have been misinterpreted. Still, they are clearly having trouble getting that point across. "Are Conservative policies going to be Liberal Lite," Williamson asks, "or something different?"

A more fundamental question is whether Harper has permanently given up on calling boldly about health care. A few years ago, he clearly described the government's monopoly on health insurance as the biggest policy problem facing Canada. But when the Supreme Court of Canada issued its recent landmark decision striking



down Quebec's ban on private insurance—and posing the way for similar court challenges from other provinces—the Tories were in no position to capitalize. Under Harper, the party has made its health policy all but indistinguishable from the Liberal doctrine of strict adherence to the

health crisis in Harper's shadow cabinet. "And the Conservative party does not support that position."

That baffles Rick Peterson, chair of the Conservative Council, a group of Tory tag-jointers who can themselves be independent advocates for better policy. Health is exactly the sort of issue where Peterson sees room for the party to sell an alternative vision. He criticized of Harper's team for being too flummoxed on naming the Liberals, particularly over the sponsorship scandal, and not energetic enough when it comes to making distinctive Conservative positions stand out. "This is a very basic branding exercise we haven't done yet," Peterson says. "The party has been lacking." He says he will start calling for Harper's head, though. "It's a no-win situation. It's not something that you have to change the leader to fix."

All the detractors Harper's woes flows from a flimsy source: the latest polls. New Gomery inquiry revelations briefly hammered the Liberals in April opinion surveys, but the governing party has bounced back. Meanwhile, the Conservatives have slipped,

and Harper's own approval numbers suffered. So Liberals, improbably, are heading to the cottage after this spring of scandal-fetted upheaval. But Johnston's book aims to take a longer view than the poll-driven political mood swings. He methodically traces Harper's evolution from a quiet

mediocrity status quo. "What the court and was that, in Quebec, people should be able to buy generic insurance and pay for services privately," said MP Steven Fletcher,

Toronto suburb (don't develop an aversion at the University of Calgary and then helping cause the Reform Party, to find a triumph in forming the new Conservative party and becoming its first leader. Along the way, Harper has been "consistently underestimated," Johnston says. And Harper's resilience, according to Johnston, is rooted in ideas. "He is not primarily a deal-maker, but primarily a policy wonk, a public intellectual."

That's not a new view of Harper, who has often been portrayed as a deep thinker, and a deeply committed one. But does it hold up today? Even Johnston's laudatory account includes hints that a less resolute Harper has emerged. On U.S. relations, for example, Johnston sees Harper as having "softened his past support for the Iraq war" and equivocated on Canadian participation in U.S. ballistic missile defence. Even on Quebec, Harper's strong stance on Johnston's view, the author sees the Tory leader as "willing to go a long way to carry forward" Johnston is especially tough in the 1995 deal Martin negotiated for Quebec in his fall's health accord and which Harper supported, calling it an example of the sort of asymmetrical federalism "calculated to keep a federation open."

Many Tory insiders will view all that as good news. To them, Harper's problem is that he has looked too tough. More flexibility is part of the solution—the right outlook for a summer image makeover. But can Harper sustain a sunny disposition? Johnston's portrayal raises doubts. Whether respects Harper's intellect, he also sees him as driven by "unwillingness to accept" for his Liberal adversaries, not to mention "a socialist persona with respect to the news media." No matter how many foulballs Harper misses, or how much gruffed foul he chews down this summer, contempt and paranoia are hard to dislodge—and tough to sell to Canadian voters in any season.

THE HARPER ENIGMA

EARLY JUNE 2004 was a heady time for the Conservatives, with the momentum growing in their favour. Would the trend continue and election day, June 28? Anything seemed possible. After the leaders' debates, though, Harper lost the race for the lead. It seemed as though he was thrown squarely off-kilter by his unexpected plunge in the polls. On June 16, Harper made perhaps his biggest mistake of the campaign when he said "There are no safe seats for the Liberals anywhere, my friend. None in Ontario, Quebec, or in the West, or in Quebec and in Ontario."

And he began talking about the transition of power from the Liberals to the Conservatives. That sent a message to the electorate of overconfidence, of presumption, of over-ambition. It showed a lack of appreciation of the tentative character of his support in Ontario, where Liberals and Conservatives were on a par. In the polls, voters still rated Martin as the best man to be prime minister.

Harper's overconfidence attracted criticism to himself, and people were uncertain about who he was. It was in large part his fault. Harper had given no co-operation to journalists who wanted to interview him in depth to establish what kind of man he was, where he came from, what he represented. Naturally aloof, scornful of photo opportunities and of stunts to attract favourable attention, he pushed reserve to something close to paranoia in his reluctance to open himself up to scrutiny. He now paid the price. Could he be criticized with governing the country? Was he a prudent, intelligent leader who would never put the public good at risk, or was he the anti-social extremist that the Liberals depicted? Canadians did not know. And now, when a Conservative government seemed likely, people paid more attention, they wondered and they worried. Now the Liberal attacks began to roar.

Two incidents in particular worked against him. One was that Ralph Klein told the world that he would be announcing changes to Alberta's health system two days after the June 28 election. Those changes would include more private delivery of health care and, he said, would probably challenge the Canada Health Act. Immediately, Lib-

eral Prime Minister Paul Martin leaped on the announcement to discover a "hidden agenda," a conspiracy where Klein had found in Harper a co-conspirator to undermine the public health system. Klein was in fact no great admirer of Harper and certainly no extremist. He had called for former Ontario premier Mike Harris to lead the new United Conservative party and had expressed doubts that Harper had what it takes. But never mind, Klein and Harper were both from Alberta, both Conservatives, and that was enough for Martin. He, a critic of Montreal, the very capital of private health care, scorned those showing that Klein and Harper were planning to gut public health care, but they wouldn't reveal the plan until after the election. And it worked.

The second incident occurred when the Conservative war room put out a press release claiming that Martin supported child pornography. The smut arose during the campaign when, on June 12, Michael Binnie, the accused murderer of a 10-year-old Toronto child, Holly Jones, claimed in court that he had abducted and sexually assaulted the little girl after being aroused by viewing child pornography on the Internet. The Conservatives' press release was titled "Paul Martin supports child pornography" and cited four occasions when Martin had vetoed spurious measures to combat child pornography. Harper, who had not seen the document before it went public, ordered the headline changed to "How tough is Paul Martin on child pornography?" But he defended the substance of the release. "I'm not going to



The Conservative leader remains an unknown figure to most Canadians

in any way give the Liberal Party any break on its record on child pornography. It is indefensible. They have had multiple opportunities to do something about it and they have systematically refused, and if they want to make the election campaign about that, the next 30 days, I'd love to fight that one."

The reaction in the media and in the public was that the release was unfair, gravely misleading, and that Harper should have apologized. He might have, but he had been so contemptuous of the Martin Liberals. For the past four months he had been in a constant, aggressive standoff with them. These attacks had been grossly unfair to him. That was for Harper just

THE VERY private Harper consistently comes across as a man far easier to admire than to really like

another upgrade in a fight to the finish. But the public did not see it that way.

From then on, Harper's campaign was seriously blighted. He could no longer get across his intended daily message. And as opponents viewed in the last days and hours before the vote, instead of becoming more outgoing, Harper seemed to sequester himself within himself, to be less available to their questions, and to have a decreased level of energy. Martin, on the other hand, showed he cared, desperately, and spoke of being in "the fight of my life." On the final day of campaigning, Martin travelled from dipping his toes in the Atlantic in the morning to closing the day with his toes in the Pacific, with several signs and speeches in between. Harper returned to Alberta as its champion, visiting at least five outcasted communities for recognition. "We're going to bring this part of the country into power

in Ottawa," he told a rally in Edmonton.

Instead of ending the campaign in Ontario, where he was born, showing that he wanted to represent the general province and all of Canada as a national leader, showing that he understood, showing that he cared, he made the mistake of returning to Alberta and sounding like a regional chief with regional priorities, just as the election campaign reached its climax. The night, as he watched the returns come in, Harper's feelings must have been bitterest. After the heady prospect of forming the government, the actual outcome was a letdown. The Conservatives won 99 seats, compared to 125 for the Liberals, 54 for the Bloc, and 19 for the NDP. There was one independent.

The Conservative share of the vote, 28.6 per cent, was better than the 25.5 per cent won by the Alliance in 2000, but far from the 37.7 per cent received in 2004 by the two parties combined. In fact, in every province, the Conservatives won a smaller share of the vote than the two parties combined had won in 2000. But the outcome seemed disappointing only because hopes had risen so high during the election campaign. The Conservatives' leader was still basically unknown and misunderstood. And yet they were able to compete credibly in the competition to form the government, not merely survive, in their first great trial.

STEPHEN HARPER is still in a position to become the next prime minister of Canada. It's time to ask the question: Would he be up to that daunting responsibility? What kind of a leader does he need: show him to be!

An interview is a profession that rewards extroverts, especially since the age of television, Harper owes the standard genres of politician's courtship report: staged photo opportunities, public displays of maternal affection for unknown children and puppets, feigned outrage, false familiarity, and theatrical grandiloquence. In that respect,

he is the polar opposite of Paul Martin and Jack Layton, but more the Office Duperpet. Unlike most politicians, he almost always means what he says, because he has thought long and hard about as issue before he speaks. As one who was a public intellectual before he ever moved to be a politician, he also says what he means. And he is consistent in his thinking and his spelling.

Like Pierre Trudeau, Harper thought long and deeply about his society, coming to conclusions and insights very different from the views of his contemporaries. He became a conservative politician, usually in opposition. He exhibits a cold brilliance and a cold arrogance that are uncharacteristic in a public figure. We like our leaders to come begging for our favour. Harper does not beg, he only goes on good enough the means. Charm, muscle is not. Nor is he warm and cuddly. Fanciers have never failed to give him advice, mumbly, on how he should model himself. Recently, Harper has made few concessions to carry favour with journalists. He clearly distrusts them and has a low opinion of their propensity. But a man who is obviously arrogant and despises journalists can't be all bad.

To evaluate him properly you must look at the man's record. On the big picture issues that arose during his career, the record shows that Harper was consistently right when almost all around him was wrong. His was right, and from the start, on the trade, right, and from the start, on the domestic deficit and on the chronic federal deficit and debt, right on the Meach Lake and Charlottetown accords, right on dealing with the "federalism" and consequent federal-provincial conflict, he was more right than on Canada's U.S. relations, where North trade is messy. Harper was wrong on official languages, and he has now changed his position by resigning French as a primary across the country.

There are Harper's strengths, and unlike his weaknesses, they have not been generally recognized. His weaknesses, of course, are equally real. He consistently displays an excess of paranoia. From the time he was elected to the Commons, his attacks on Chretien, and now on Martin, have often been over the top. There is a harshness, a lack of humour, humanity and moderation, that derails the tradition of Parliament. His excess of partisanship was revealed in the strategy he demonstrated in April in killing



Harper is as intelligent as a politician. But, in the age of television, rewards extend to him.

down the government and precipitated an election. The supposed perfection of the majority in the Commons, the continuation of firing Liberal ministers at the highest levels in payoffs, backroads, fraudulent contracts, and breaches of the law, in fairness,

ON THE big-picture issues that arose during his career, the record shows that he was consistently right

Harper should have been content to await the judge's evaluation of the facts in his report at the end of the year. The people of Canada had a right to be better informed before they were faced with the new elections.

Another of Harper's failings is his reluctance to reveal himself to the public through

journalism as intermediaries. For example, he refused to be interviewed for this biography even though he knew it was a unique undertaking by a serious journalist. He seems to have developed a touch of paranoia with respect to the news media. It may simply be part of a compulsion to control everything he can in his environment. He does not easily delegate responsibility. And he has demonstrated to people close to him, including his staff, his own reluctance to divulge information about himself. One result is that he has made it very difficult for ordinary Canadians to have a true understanding of him.

has placed unnecessary obstacles in the way of their making an informed evaluation of the man who asks them to make him prime minister. They sense in him the shadow of a common touch, of humanity, and for that reason they have not wanted to harm or develop him, despite all his impressive qualities. It is someone you can admire without really liking.

But, in the last resort, what is most important in a prospective prime minister is demonstrated good judgment, his integrity, his wise policies, his broad experience, his willingness to make hard decisions for the common good even if they are unpopular, and his commitment to work to the best of his ability and his energy to lead the country in peace, justice and prosperity. In each of these respects, wars and all, Stephen Harper rates better than any other leader on the federal scene since Prime Trudeau. ■

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THE RIGHT COURT

LUIZA CH. SAVAGE reports on George W. Bush's quest for conservative justice

OVER THE U.S. Supreme Court's amplification system, he sometimes sounds like an emcee. Dennis Vadey. Righty and wrong, with incoherence in the air, Chief Justice William Hubbs Rehnquist has valiantly continued to preside over the proceedings. It's a situation that may not last much longer. Rehnquist's age and battle with thyroid cancer have Washington speculating that the judge could hang up his robe when the court con-

cludes its term later this month. More than a decade has passed since the last opening in the ideologically divided bench, where the average age is 71. And Republicans can all but count on the opportunity that eluded them in George W. Bush's first term: to appoint a younger, but more conservative judge who could influence the court for a generation.

The warm-up acts to that coming political carnival have been fascinating. There was the fight over the fate of Terri Schiavo, the brain-damaged Florida woman who died

on March 31 after lower courts decided she should be taken off of life support (the Supreme Court refused to hear her parents' appeal). The case put judicial selection at the top of the agenda for religious activist groups. It was followed by an ill-supposed showdown over a handful of controversial appellate nominees. One Republican senator has even

with a person who might want to pump a few billions into judges

who are "making political decisions yet are unaccountable to the public." "There has been hostility building up for years over judicial overreach," says Ron Rabinson, executive director of the Committee for Justice, a group that promotes the president's nominees to the bench. "At the grassroots level, there is excitement about taking back the Constitution for the people."

Democrats, too, are bracing. Three dozen telephones have been scouted across fifth-floor

room at the downtown Washington office of People for the American Way. The liberal activist group is one of several preparing to fight what many fear will be the reappointment of a conservative judge who would try to restrict

abortion, put environmental regulations, and limit the free-speech church and state. "An unbalanced judicial right is putting our freedom at risk by seeking ideological control over the federal judiciary," says Ralph Nader, the group's president. "The Supreme Court is their top prize."

On the surface, the potential for ideological change may appear minor. A Republican president would fill the vacancy left by Rehnquist, a conservative, with another right-wing judge, either as chief justice or as an associate. The court's delicate ideological balance, which tilts 5 to 4 in many controversial cases, will likely remain just as wobbly and unpredictable. Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, who retired last year, was appointed by Ronald Reagan, yet continues to drive the right's agenda by occasionally siding with more liberal judges. But at some point, there will be other vacancies, possibly to be filled by Bush or another Republican president—and opportunities to change the balance.

For the moment, though, the question is if Rehnquist leaves, what kind of conservative would Bush have pick? Thomas of a Mill wide-spread reputation, Rehnquist became the top court's most conservative member when he was nominated by Richard Nixon and took his seat in 1972 on a largely liberal bench. But much has changed during his 33 years on the court—19 of them as chief justice. Today, the building tradition-alist with the bulky eyebrows is no longer at the far-right side of the court. When Bush talks about the kind of judge he wants to appoint, he focuses on Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas, two younger justices with the strongest views of constitutional rights among the nine-member court (either could be tapped to be chief justice). "On a range of issues, Scalia and Thomas have been more to the right than the chief of justice," says Elliot Mincberg, legal director for People for the American Way. "They have been willing to go after governments for not being as strict as they'd like them to be."

Abortion is clearly the hot-button issue in the debate. To the dismay of his pro-life backers, Bush has pledged that no single issue would lead "him" to a Supreme Court nominee. Rather, after admission to the original meaning of the Constitution has become a requirement. "In the philosophy of federalism, the administration is looking for a serious commitment and a greater

pled influence to sustained judging and a modest view of the judiciary's role," says Bradford Berenson, a former associate counsel to the Bush White House who was involved in judicial selections.

In practice, though, that is likely to produce a judge opposed to Roe v. Wade (the 1973 case that established abortion on request) on the grounds that abortion is not mentioned in the federal constitution and is therefore outside federal jurisdiction. The court for the pro-life life is that even conservative critics of Roe differ on whether the ruling should be overturned, or whether, as the majority of the current court has held, it is such an established law that to upset it would cause judicial chaos. "You will see if this principle prevails conservative or not. It will be a fine decision," says Rabinson. "But some might say overturning

IT'S BEEN 11 YEARS SINCE the Supreme Court had an opening, and right-wingers are eagerly awaiting their chance

it in one fell swoop would be too radical." "Whether replace Rehnquist? The White House is closely guarding its charter of potential nominees. The President may want to name the first Latino judge to the top court. "They have almost prevented the Hispanic community a justice," says Tim Goldstein, a Washington lawyer who specializes in Supreme Court litigation. One leading contender in the category is Judge Emilio Garza, a 57-year-old Texas state of Mexican-American descent who was appointed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit by the President's father in 1991.

An experienced judge with solid conservative credentials, he has been a lead appearance of Bush v. Wade. His nomination could result in the spectacle of Democrats attacking the first Hispanic nominee.

Some observers believe the President, who is battling up political capital in his struggle to pass a sweeping reform of Social Security, would prefer to avoid a fierce congressional fight. On that score, Judge John Roberts, 50, a former deputy solicitor general under Reagan and the elder Bush who rejected unambiguously confirmed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Co-

lumbia in 2003, is thought to be a top choice. As a former government lawyer and private lawyer who specialized in Supreme Court appeals, he is well known and liked. And perhaps he might sell points for Roberts in that he has not had time to accrue case a lengthy paper trail that could complicate his confirmation. However, that lack of a solid record concerns conservatives, who fear he may prove to be unpredictable—while liberals are worried that he might be too much of a moderate, not notably being as going that far. Wade was wrongly decided and should be overturned.

Another theory has the President rewarding his religious-right backers by naming a judge who would loudly interpret the constitutional clause forbidding Congress from passing laws "establishing religion." At the top of the list is Michael McConnell, a 49-year-old former law professor who sits on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit. He's been praised by Democrats for having argued against the enactment of 800 Clinton, and for naming him the Supreme Court should have given him more time to conduct a measure in the 2000 election. But he's also been accused of being too liberal, and his short tenure for his work during the first term of religion. (The Washington-based organization Americans United for the Separation of Church and State has called his views on religion "right out of the Middle Ages.")

There are other possibilities. J. Michael Bork, 51, whose chambers in the Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit in Richmond, Va., have been a constant source of clerks for justices Thomas and Scalia, and Alberto Gonzales, 38, an attorney general and paid friend. As for Rehnquist, the man who has owned all the nomination speculation has been right-tipped about his intentions since he disclosed his illness last fall. It is hard to say whether Rehnquist's clerical and office in person in cases—and the fact that, with the aid of a cane, he administered the Oath of Office to the President last January—argue that he might be persuaded, or merely that his of maintaining the dignity of the office. But the fact that he might have reason to fight on. Another three years on the bench would allow him to over the books and for the record as the court's longest serving justice at 80 years. That is, if, of course, he survives a difficult surgery.

if the sitting chief justice (left) retires, where will the President pick?



WHAT'S A WHISTLE-BLOWER?

Years of scandal produced a new sort of hero. Now we've got a glut.

OUR SOCIETY has conjured a lot of new saviors over the past few years, and we all think the whistle-blowers. Their words are sacred and their motives unspeakable because they need to raise a tiny cry. And since truth has been in such desperate need of applying armor to political and corporate leaders in recent years, their personal sacrifices have seemed that much more important, their integrity that much more exceptional.

Naturally, since these brave heroes become objects of adulation, everybody now wants to be one. And that's where things get complicated.

Whistle-blower worship actually isn't a terribly new phenomenon. When Daniel Ellsberg leaked the Pentagon Papers to the press and Deep Throat helped John F. Kennedy get a little better, and finally, it seems every crank with an axe to grind and an unpopular opinion toward the office calls himself a corporate watchdog, while every manager who demands a little loyalty and discretion gets labeled a cover-up artist. It's nice to define exactly what a whistle-blower is, and more importantly, what it isn't, before the term loses its meaning entirely.

But as nice as these things sound, they get a little twisted. And lately, it seems every crank with an axe to grind and an unpopular opinion toward the office calls himself a corporate watchdog, while every manager who demands a little loyalty and discretion gets labeled a cover-up artist. It's nice to define exactly what a whistle-blower is, and more importantly, what it isn't, before the term loses its meaning entirely.

Consider the case of Dr. Peter Rea, a top physician at a major drug giant, Pfizer. Last September, Rea caused a stir by holding a press conference, along with several co-conspirators, calling on government to allow the importation of drugs to the U.S. from

foreign sources to meaningfully reduce costs. Rea's actions were seen as a major blow to the pharmaceutical industry, and he was widely criticized for his actions. Rea's actions were seen as a major blow to the pharmaceutical industry, and he was widely criticized for his actions.

LATELY, it seems every crank with an axe to grind is a "corporate watchdog," and every manager who demands a little loyalty and discretion is a "cover-up artist."

But America doesn't have a monopoly on courage and values, or whistle-blowers for that matter. Canada's shameful Ad-scams debate and a slew of corporate scandals soon erupted. After Enron, the U.S. adopted a maximum fine of US\$5 million and up to 20 years in prison for executives caught trying to silence internal informants. Canada followed last year with its own law protecting those who report criminal wrongdoing in the workplace. Pretty soon you could hardly hear yourself think out of the whistle-blower's blow.

Well, most of us agreed, this was good. This was necessary. The bulls of power—both corporate and political—were in need of some down. To finger would be like any

personality in Canada and elsewhere. This protectionist Americans take advantage of our lower drug prices, and it has been strongly opposed by big drug companies, including Pfizer. The fact that Rea was on their campaign against his own company struck a lot of nerves, and soon he was discussing his views on 60 Minutes and in an opinion piece for the New York Times.

Since then, Rea has been holed up, closed to discover that he feels a little isolated and it seems nobody reports to him anymore. He's been given a new office away from the action and little work to do. A couple of

weeks ago, he sat at a telephone briefly napped working, which prompted a cry in the Times, headlined "A Pfizer, the whistle-blower for a 'Whistle-blower'."

The trouble is, Rea isn't a whistle-blower. He's a knee-pain doctor. He's not exposed any crime, as Wikström did. He hasn't uncovered evidence of bias or corruption, like Wigmore did. He simply took a public stance directly contrary to the interests of the shareholders who pay his salary—and a long one at that. The fact that Pfizer hasn't fired Rea suggests our law either works quickly while his strategy goes too far.

Rea is an understating, which means he's supposed to be a public representative of the company. How can Pfizer continue to pay a man who urges government to allow foreign pharmacies to fill found prescriptions, endorsed by doctors who've never seen the product? It calls into question his loyalty, but also his grasp of the business.

Rea's case is reminiscent of that of the first Health Canada scientist—Shirley Chagnon, Margaret Heydon and Gerald Lamberton—found his way to the whistleblowers. They

too have dished themselves in the whistle-blower's drink and the press has eagerly played along. But like Rea, they're simply workers who don't know the difference between cover up and a difference of opinion. They think certain drugs and solutions should be banned, and other solutions designed. That doesn't give them the right to publicly scorn their agencies and the system of approving drugs in Canada. If their consciences demanded this level of freedom, then the honorable thing would be to resign. Instead they like Rea, say "you're my psychopomp and my friend of speech."

There's an important distinction between a whistle-blower and a molester, and it's how we started recognizing it. Things are getting so crowded now that we need a

Rea's story was written by "All Business." At www.macleans.ca/whistleblower

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classic Western with Alan Ladd. So the principal says to me, "They make fun of your name, so we're going to change it to Shane" from then on, on all my records, I was known as Shane. But it's Shane Bagha, which is a bit weird. On one side it is very familiar, it's Wuzuzur, the other side is, where the hell does he come from?" But it stuck, and now it seems almost everyone calls him simply Shane, or even Mr. Shane.

"It has become my brand," he says of his name, and a phenomenally successful brand it is. Even Arthur Erickson, Canada's leading architect, has designed a 48-store masterpiece for Shane. His 30,000-sq-foot palaces are the default choice of those who have arrived in the fiscal stratosphere.

Canada's Iranian community is not large. Older members tend to refer to themselves as Persians, from their country's former name, and many are wealthy and highly influential. Their qualifications for the New-Canadian Establishment are impeccable: they are generous philanthropists, active in community affairs and very political without being partisan. In the past year or so, for example, Shane funded high-yield fund raises in his living room for Paul Martin (L), and John Tory (Ontario Progressive Conservative) and David Miller (his socialist mayor of Toronto). Most of Shane's considerable donations flow into the coffers of the University of Toronto and Sunnybrook hospital.

As I spend most of the afternoon talking to Bagha, I have to keep reminding myself that he is a developer, that he seems to be driven more by ideas than money. That may be a legacy of obtaining part of his secondary and all of his tertiary education in England. If every developer had his old-world manners, they would quickly learn that anything less than top-notch reputation. He's serious, thoughtful individual with no small talk.

His mother's family comes from a string line of rabbis, but for several generations both sides of the family have pursued Bahá'ism. "Bahá'ism," he tells me, "appealed to the Jews back in the 19th century, because it was a modern religion. I went to a French-Jewish school in Iran until I was 12. Not only did I study the Torah, but I



learned Islamic history and religious studies. Bahá'is believe in Moses, they believe in Jesus, they believe in Muhammad. They believe in equality of man and woman, which is unlike the Torah and the holy book the Quran." Nearly 150 years old, the religion has sent five million adherents around the world. Bagha says his studies in Bahá'ism have led him to believe in the "oneness" of humankind. "I believe that we are all one: one planet, one people. I hope to become a bit radical, and include animals with us, but believe it or not, scientifically speaking, we're all from one cell. Our very existence here was a mere coincidence. Statistically, how many millions, billions, of different things have had to happen, all at the same time, for us to be here?"

Being corporately understaffed may not be a consideration of the Bahá'is faith, but Shane acts as if it were. His office structure isn't less, it's smarter. There are exactly three employees in his head office, and another dozen who report to him from various divisions. The revenues of his companies are about equal to those of an equivalent Toronto real estate builder that employs four vice-presidents and seven directors, plus 65 people in its offices. "I've been completely outsourceed," Bagha tells me. "My architect is on his own, he can work for the others, too, if the wages I don't want to monopolize him, but I have the freedom to go to others. My

engineers are all outsourceed. I tend to use the same ones, so long as they keep doing what they're doing, and they know that I don't have to particularly tell them that if they don't perform, they're not going to be there next time. Nearly everyone is self-employed. They look after their own workers' compensation, their own pension, their own union dues, or whatever there is. And they basically give me a bill plus GST—that's all I see, and all I pay for. So that has enabled me to basically become my own human resources person, without going into details about workers' compensation or pension or the responsibility of their medical insurance, and so on. They look after all that themselves."

Bagha was born in 1949 in the ancient city of Hamadan, where his father had a transportation company using long-haul trucks. "I was the last child of the family," he recalls. "I was a mistake. Mom didn't think she could get pregnant, and dad was close to 60. But she went to the doctor, complained of gaining weight very quickly, and found out that she was seven months pregnant."

"I had the luxury of having travel, the luxury of living at a very good school. Mom was not a trained anthropologist, but she knew a lot. She used to go on excavation expeditions, and she knew so much about history that I learned a great deal about Persian and of course Jewish history, and the history of the Bahá'is."



Bagha's mission (far left) the builder in his living room and with his wife, Marzi. He adopted the name Shane—from the Alnashad Westway—as a student in England.

By training, Bagha is a mechanical engineer, but he loves art in all its manifestations, and adding poetry, which he writes as well as reads. "I don't want to sound romantic or crazy," he says, "but I think the fact that I love literature has made me a more observant individual. I pay tremendous attention to detail."

Off his home furnishings, for example, he says he didn't just buy antique simply because he thought that was appropriate for his type of home. Instead, he bought every piece for its own meaning. "My mom would tell us why the legs of an Empire-style chair are the way they are, and what the artists did in the time, and how this evolved into a different design," he says. "My mom also used to take me to the garden as a kid and show me different flowers and the details of the inside of them—the pollen, the stigma, the structure—and how wonderful nature was."

Bagha went to England in 1963 to continue his education, ultimately studying engineering in London. Halfway through his studies, he married Marzi, an Iranian architect's daughter. They had two children, a son and daughter, now grown. And they decided to move to Canada. "One day in 1972, I walked into the entrance hall of our college, and there were two desks set up: one was Australian government, the other was Canada immigration and manpower, and they were giving out pamphlets," he recalls. "When I was a kid, I used to read Jack London's books, *War of the Ranges* and *The Call of the Wild*, and was fascinated by the Yukon and the Northwest Territories." He arrived in Toronto in 1973, and shortly after that he put a \$5,000 down payment on a \$1-million tract of land in suburban Thornhill, subdivided it and sold the 11 lots before he could purchase a deal closed. "How I did it, God only knows," he says. "I had to see the local politicians, I had to run in the mayor. I had to go to the neighbours. One thing I learned, and that has always worked for me: I approached the newspapers and the neighbours before I approached the local politicians. I very quickly realized that

OUR MAD SCIENTISTS

They're getting very angry over funding, writes PAUL WELLS

LATE LAST YEAR, Michel Desjardins, who holds a Canada Research Chair in cellular microbiology at the Université de Montréal, applied for a research grant from Genome Canada, the semi-lethal foundation that since 2000 has provided most of the federal money in Canada that goes toward genetic research. Genome Canada grants are assigned competitively, but Desjardins had reason to be optimistic. In previous competitions, Genome Canada had granted him money for projects that led to research papers in two prestigious journals, *Cell* and *Nature*. Both papers have received extraordinary international acclaim.

A year ago, Desjardins and a private company he helped to found, Capnia, won a US\$13 million contract from the U.S. National Institutes of Health to study the way geneticist interests in *Bacillus*, an obscure pathogen often found in unpasteurized milk or cheese. *Bacillus* doesn't kill many people in a year, but some people think it could be used by terrorists to kill a lot more—which made the NIH so eager to study *Bacillus* that it awarded a rare defence research contract to a non-American research team.

Desjardins now wanted to apply the expertise he'd acquired with the NIH money to a far sicker bug. Tuberculosis kills perhaps two million people a year, most of them in the developing world. It is caused by mycobacteria, which have a habit of entering the human host and are attacked by specialized defence cells; they change their appearance by synthesizing new proteins. Desjardins wanted to analyze those proteins as the first step toward blocking their production and lowering the deadly mycobacteria's risk and virulence.

Genome Canada randomly half the cost of a research project. It requires that researchers identify other agencies or private sources besides willing to pay the other half. "Co-funding" arrangements are designed to make sure dollars go twice as far,



Desjardins has now linked up with others who have had their grant applications rejected

because this research can be very costly. Desjardins' tuberculosis project had an \$8 million budget, so he needed \$4 million from Genome Canada. In his application, he listed the earlier NIH contract and Capnia as sources for the rest of the money. "If we were to try to develop the same tools that [Capnia] did, all by ourselves in academia, it would cost tens of millions of dol-

lars," Desjardins said in an interview.

In April, Desjardins sat in Montreal before a grant review panel from Genome Canada to defend his project, not on the quality of his science, but on his plan for financing and funding it. This was the so-called "due diligence" step in the grant competition, and it was the first time Genome Canada applications had gone through this stage

before being paid out their scientific merit.

Near the end of April, Genome Canada told Desjardins his project had been rejected. He never had a chance to defend his science in front of other scientists. To Desjardins, this was a fundamental breakdown in the doctrine of "peer review," by which scientists decide among themselves which of their colleagues should have a project funded or a paper published. "This was really a unique chance for Canada to distinguish

itself and put together an effort regarding a disease that is defined as a major challenge by all the organizations that deal with infectious," he said. "I think there was an opportunity here that was missed—basically by rules that almost came out of the blue."

Desjardins contacted John Bergeron, the chairman of McGill University's anatomy and cell biology department. Bergeron is the elected president of the Human Proteome Organization, a global body coordinating research in the proteomic field of proteomics. When genome scientists find genes that encode the characteristics of a living organism, proteomics studies the proteins that allow those genes to be expressed in the way a creature lives, moves, responds to injury or fights off attack.

From the Montreal headquarters of the Human Proteome Organization, Bergeron coordinates research in the United States, China, Sweden, France, Britain and Germany. In addition to the latest Genome Canada competition, he also proposed his own research into the ways some proteins could serve as models for human proteins. It was to be Canada's contribution to the global effort.

Bergeron, too, was turned down, ostensibly because his no funding arrangements weren't robust enough. The two Montrealers contacted Mike Tyers, a senior scientist at the Samuel Lunenfeld Research Institute in Toronto's Mount Sinai Hospital. Tyers was part of an international, multi-disciplinary effort to study how relatively small molecules in drugs interact with larger organisms. As part of that project, Tyers' group had spent about \$100,000 on antibodies' plans to show how their research experiments would fit in a new University of Toronto building.

Genome Canada rejected Tyers, too, be-

fore his peers could judge the intellectual quality of his work.

Bioethical researchers in Canada are a tightly knit community. It didn't take long for rejected scientists to find one another and compare notes. In a series of interviews with *Macleod's*, more than a dozen researchers across the country depicted Genome Canada as an organization that has become so concerned about demonstrating sound book-keeping that it is failing to promote the best science. Some say Genome Canada should be shut down altogether and its budget reallocated to the Canadian Institutes for Health Research (CIHR), which distributes grants according to peer review. McGill's Bergeron has written to David Eizenman, Canada's industry minister, calling for Genome Canada's president, Martin Godbout, and chairman, Henry Friesen, to be fired.

In a telephone interview, Godbout strenuously defended Genome Canada's funding practices and chided up the complainers to a few sore losers. "Everyone that did not pass due diligence is complaining," he says. "These that have [survived due diligence], we did not hear from them." But it's hardly to write off such prominent investigators as sore losers. "They may be sore, but they're not losers," says Jerry Lawson, the director of the Samuel Lunenfeld Research Institute. "There are some of the very best young scientists we have in the country."

Science complaints are also being leveled by scientists who survived the co-funding exam and who are still in the running for

MANY say that co-funding by Genome Canada forces them to become administrators, and not scientists

big Genome Canada grants. Mike Allen, another Toronto researcher, leads a 27-member team whose \$10 million grant application is awaiting scientific review. "I spent more time on the bioethical due diligence preparations and looking at Excel spreadsheets than I did on the science," he says. "That's just not a good use of my time. And it certainly doesn't help me in a competitive sense."

The wholly collaborative nature of big science funds Canadian research to a much extent to colleagues around the world. And it's not good news, once these links are cut, that when a grant application is rejected, Mount Sinai's Wharton-Oppenheim falls apart,

collaborators overt to competitors. "It's a very delicate situation when we're arranging these partnerships with only among groups in the States. They could be our best person. They could also squish us like bugs."

David Thomson is the chairman of McGill's biochemistry department. His application for \$11.5 million from Genome Canada for research into cystic fibrosis passed due diligence, but he's still not happy. "Co-funding? I think it's a crack," he says. "You make for poor science and weakened industry. Because industry says, you know, 'We'll just do incremental research and we'll get federal granting agencies' to do things that are a little more risky.' And it doesn't encourage a risk-taking function within industry."

The effect on science is even more obvious, at least to the extent Louis Bernatchez is probably right about. At 85, he has been called the father of genetics research in Canada. Over the years, he's been at Toronto's University of Toronto, he argued that forcing scientists to be co-funding entrepreneurs dulls their intellectual edge in an increasingly global competition for the best ideas. "It's bloody hard to be competitive," he says. "You have to think about science in the shower. Not about the next application that you've got to write. Not about the next report that you've got to write. Not that you've got to collaborate with somebody in order to do it. You have to think about your science. And it's a full-time occupation. You never know when your idea will come."

How does co-funding work? Most often, a researcher finds a private company that's willing to let him use a piece of laboratory equipment or some sophisticated reagent at less than the going market rate, or a kind of donation that can be accounted as co-funding.

What kind of science gets promoted in that process? Science that's not too far ahead of current scientific practice. Science that's not too surprising or radical. What kind of research gets promoted? The kind that's well-established enough to have a lot of connections in private firms and facilities around the world. It's a bit like a lottery, by definition. Not winners, and not youngsters with new ideas and imagination that could lead to big new research buildings on campus or state the contrary.

This arrangement probably wasn't optional. It compensated for years of cuts to Canada's research capacity through the 1990s. It barely kept Canada in the global game at a time when European and American research



got co-funding for the diversity of initiatives."

Then why engage co-funding? Because the federal government and some provinces have so radically ramped up Canada's capacity for research, beginning in the late 1990s, that it's a challenge to pay for all the new science that's getting done. Since 1998, the federal government has budgeted \$18 billion for research infrastructure, funds to hire researchers, subsidies to graduate students, and other science costs. This extraordinary effort received little attention from journalists or opposition politicians while it was happening. But its effect is obvious in big new research buildings on campuses across the country.

This arrangement probably wasn't optional. It compensated for years of cuts to Canada's research capacity through the 1990s. It barely kept Canada in the global game at a time when European and American research

budgets were robust—and China's and India's research capacity was exploding.

But a big investment also creates a new reality. When you build dozens of new buildings and hire 1,446 new Canada Research Chairs, you're creating immense new demand for research dollars. "It's a peculiarly Canadian thing—I can say it as an immigrant," says Pearson, who was born in Britain. "Canadians always worry about building world-class institutions. My view is that actually, Canadians are pretty good at building world-class institutions. What they're not good at is maintaining them once they've got them—because it takes a different order of commitment."

Goodluck, the president of Genome Canada, insists his organization is part of this commitment and that its co-funding requirement is vital to stretching taxpayer dollars. He asked for nearly \$500 million

in the 2005 budget. But the Martin government has substantially slowed the Chrétien government's white-hot pace of investment in research. Goodluck counts himself lucky to have landed \$165 million for the current grant competition.

Genome Canada has always required applicants to find co-funding for their projects. This time, Goodluck says, it simply made co-funding the criterion for the first call. "We have to remind everyone that we're talking here of very large-scale projects

EVEN scientists who have received Genome Canada grants are not giving the agency a hearty endorsement



Goodluck (far left) listens as then-industry minister Allan Rock announces a major research program in 2003. Tijen Isik Isik

Genome Canada is managing public money. And we have to make sure that the money is used properly. You do not manage a \$200,000 grant the same way you manage a \$20 million grant. So you need management to do that."

To ensure that Macdonald's head office perspective—that of researchers who are actively complaining about the current grant competition, Genome Canada provided a list of other researchers who weren't rejected during the diligence. Yet the first two researchers on Genome Canada's own list were unwilling to give the organization a hearty endorsement.

The best. All Edwards, a genetics researcher at the University of Toronto, could say was that co-funding is a necessary quid-pro-quo for a world of scientific resources. "No scientist in Canada believes that there should be co-funding," he observes. "I am 100 per cent in agreement with them. If we had extra money that was dripping from trees, we wouldn't have it. But we don't live in Shangri-La. We live in a political reality."

Edwards acknowledges that co-funding puts a heavy administrative burden on researchers who would rather do research. "I have a job in Britain that is funded by the Wellcome Trust, which just pays the money on the table and says, 'Here it is, go.' Do I prefer that? Absolutely." Indeed, Edwards

argues that Genome Canada distributes such a small portion of all science funding in Canada that disgruntled researchers can simply work around it if they like. "One doesn't have to apply for [a Genome Canada grant], if you don't want to."

Tom Macdonald, the director of the new genome researchers at McGill, was another scientist suggested by Genome Canada. He says that in the aftermath of the sponsorship scandal, Genome Canada's concern about wasting every tax dollar is understandable. Then he castigates himself. "It may be true that all the rules were followed, but the result is that major personal initiatives have been cut. It's not strategic to not have several leading groups in preference to Canada. I can tell you that Genome Québec [the Quebec government's own granting agency] acquires downright about this."

What's shocking is so many of these conversations with researchers have quickly become a blur of apoplexy that was so obvious in the research community only a few years ago has faded. There is a huge federal money in research that there was half a decade ago, yet morale is sinking fast. Leading researchers are thinking of leaving the country, Tijen says. "Or they may just check out and go in a half-said effort for the rest of their career. Students as if poor does is the bubble that happened and, you know, it's now apparent that there was a lot of people who felt frustrated because of all these red-tape in the funding system. So the trickle-down effects are enormous."

CANCER BE DAMNED, KIDS WANNA TAN

Sun is the new tobacco. DANYLO HAWALESHKA explores why the young, especially, just can't quit.

IN WINTER, if there's something special going on—a friend's birthday party, say, or a family gathering at Christmas—Nirah-Jean Howard, 19, heads to the tanning salon for a little color. These days, though, Howard might join friends around the pool, or maybe at the trampoline in the backyard, to make sure she keeps that sun-kissed glow for a Saturday night out on the town. She finds a tan from the sun better looking than the ones

she gets indoors, or what she and her friends call the “sunk and baked” look. The alternative—pale—is no alternative at all. The Colorado, Ore., woman, who's working part-time in a sporting goods store this summer and returning to school in the fall, doesn't spend a lot of time worrying about skin cancer. “Nowadays, you can get cancer from anything,” says Howard. “I’ve always noticed Christina Aguilera—when she had her darker hair, she was always tanned. Lindsay Lohan started looking really tanned, too, and I heard Britney Spears had, like, a tanning bed on her tour bus. So I was like, ‘If all these celebrities are doing it, I mean, why can't I?’”

The American Dermatology Association says, “No tan is a good tan,” since all exposure to solar radiation—whether from the sun or a tanning lamp—damages the skin to some extent. To the surprise, though, you might as well be saying, “No war is good war.” Young people, especially, have re-embraced tanning with a vengeance,

leading to soaring sales and, in worst cases, cooking up the sun. Last month, the American Academy of Dermatology released a survey indicating 79 per cent of youths between 12 and 17 knew tanning can be dangerous. And 51 per cent recognize that sunburns during childhood up the risk of skin cancer. Yet 60 per cent said they burned last summer. It gets worse: While more than a third of those surveyed said they knew someone who had skin cancer, almost half said people with tans look healthier.

Tanning beds are the worst offenders, with only 32 per cent of those 15 to 17 reporting they're either very or somewhat careful under the sun. “This lax behaviour could explain findings from a previous study published in the January 2005 issue of the *Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology* in which older white men had a higher incidence of skin cancer,” the academy reported.

A new generation of bearded businessmen and heavy smokers is making the men chic again. Say

Skin cancer is up, but an old skin tan looks healthy and attractive



what you will about Canada's *idol* flow. Ben Mulroney—and there's lots to say—has the pay, he's withdrawn for the current TV season so he can, as it is in this country, spend a perpetual summer here while he dutifully models his love affair with tanning beds. For the field, the multitalented queen of the new brown-is-beautiful era include the ubiquitous, café au lait-colored Tina Turner, Jennifer Aniston, aka, the “golden girl,” beamed herself supermodel Gisele Bündchen, and Charlize Theron, who had a celestial tanning malfunction at last year's Oscars. Theron's fake tan—once commentator remarked she looked like a “brown-baked gingerbread”—will serve to underscore a growing schism of the current tanning culture: adherents to the sunless spray-on glow.

While observing that the “deep, dark sort of R&B of tanning” look we've seen from the “It's not about my money, it's about my beauty”-era Britney Spears, she confirms that a “natural, nice, glowing look” is currently de rigueur. “Sort of like the one I, Jo or Jenna Jameson, would wear today,” she adds. The sleek center score, though, has some turning to the bottle instead of basking, says Lie. “I think there's just this undeniable link with looking healthy and sexy. You go to South

Beach, South America, Spain. Italy, you see all these people with beautiful, dark skin and it's really sexy. You can't help but be attracted to it, whether it's good for you or not.”

We North Americans are chasing UV radiation more vigorously than ever. According to Statistics Canada, Canadians last year made almost 1.5 million trips to tanning in the Caribbean for stays of one night or more, spending 74 per cent more on the 360,000 visits made in 2009. Similarly, the U.S. tanning salon market in North America has shown phenomenal growth, going from fewer than 10,000 outlets in the early 1990s to about 30,000 today. “Gold equals healthy and white equals old,” says Daniel Mann, vice president of global research and development for Tarte Cosmetics in Melville, N.Y. “Nobody wants to deal with people who look old.” This avowed possum peeps to go lie down on a beach and get bronzed. They look rested and everybody looks better than them.

Mannella, recent medical reports about the benefits of sun exposure have people looking off their rear ends and scratching their heads. Some recent studies associate ultraviolet light with a decrease in certain cancers. For many tan-whippers, fad up with being told what they do is bad for them,

but news has virtually wiped out two decades of warnings about the dangers of tanning.

The discovery of the ozone hole above the Antarctic in the mid-1980s alerted to many it was time to cover up risks like can't be denied. But, long after the hole, baby strollers decked in blankets, and sunscreens with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 60 became the height of parental fashion for conscientious parents. Men and dad covered up, too. Goofy Tilly has—part African safari park kid, part outdoor fitness—could be spotted perched inconspicuously on men and women in business suits striding purposefully to work in financial districts across the country. The sea was tame.

But lots of people—especially young men—now seem scared to renege on warnings. Sun is the new tobacco: it's a bad habit, when we go, we can't seem to stop, and tans are cool. Norman Hoxworth, 26, just graduated from high school and now works part time as a waitress in a Greek restaurant. The 5'6-inch-tall, originally from Toronto, is a person of color, but the many of her friends she doesn't feel right of their skin's darkened by a tan. She's been, having a morning salon for three months now, three or four times a week. “A dark skin color gives



me a feeling of like, power or security,” on glossy Hoxworth. “I feel more attractive.” And so, we're seeing older young people, celebrities, and her own models. “Anyone can look skinned, but she still gets tanned, that's what I heard. All these celebrities getting a tan gives us students the hope to look, in some ways, like them.”



Amazingly, it doesn't feel like the way she does despite the fact a friend, just 23, has been diagnosed with skin cancer. “It's honest, I've thought about it. I know I might get this cancer, but sometimes—especially when you go to parties—you just want to look good no matter what,” says Hoxworth. “I'd rather look good than worry

about what can happen to me—looks are more important to me sometimes than my health.”

For anyone eager to get a tan—and not getting skin cancer or, well—this summer is shaping up to be a great one. Tanningroom Canada says the outlook is for temperatures warmer than usual right across the

country. Precipitation, lighter to ponder, is expected to be below-normal despite recent downpours in Alberta.

At the same time, the ozone layer needed to filter the sun's harmful rays is anywhere from one to eight per cent below its normal level across Canada. “There's no clear evidence for how much sun is safe,” says Dr. Richard Langer, director of research in the division of dermatology at Dalhousie University in Halifax. “We know the sun is a carcinogen, but how much is safe? It's kind of impossible to tell how many steps across a day you can tolerate.”

IT HADN'T always been like this. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, pale was in. European women would casually tearfully

GLOW FROM A BOTTLE



Chanel got the tanning rage started

BLAME IT ON COCO CHANEL. In the 1920s, the story goes, the French fashion maven moved her design shop from elegant Paris to the Riviera and began to court about on rich men's yachts—sans perru. Vella, Coco's newsworthy pick-up was pink to tan, and what a rage it was. Being all these years later, tanned skin—or tanned-looking skin—is still a preoccupation with the fashionable set because, as Revlon Canada's national product trainer Jacques Hutchinson says, “Nobody wants to look white—white means old and decrepit.” In New York, Clinique's director of global marketing for sun care, Leigh Smiller, goes one better. “Tanned people look fit and healthy. They look better in summer clothes. They look fresher.” What? “I said, ‘Thinner.’”

It's hard to believe that skin—once the domain of face workers—is a sought-after beauty accessory, but consider this: Inexpensive from Estée Lauder for Spring 2010, Sunless Super Tan for Face for \$20, Sunless Super Tan for Body for \$34.50



and Go Tan Tinted Lotion for Face & Décolletage for \$30. And those are just three of 15 new “tanning” products from one company in Canada. There are literally thousands more. As for sunscreens and sunblocks (the latter term has been ruled verboten on product labels in the U.S. by the Food and Drug Administration), most cosmetics companies pride themselves on not so much to, as use the old-timey lingo, “keep you safe in the sun,” as to use the new lingo, “keep you safe outside—keeping skin cool and gentle forever, wrinkles, in mind—use our sunscreen, max SPF 30, and, well, please use them as you like, the second option and option still.” “I never go out in the sun. And if I do, I know no wrinkles.”

Self-tanning got its start with over-the-counter fake-tan cream called Quick Tan, introduced by Covermark in 1960. It was a must-have for Canadian girls who wanted to look like surfers and were ashamed to settle for a shocky, streaky fake tanning product. Many women in tanning salons, but dermatologists prefer

their hairbrushes. Simply put, all tanning lotions, no matter how much or little they cost, work by an extract of sugar cane called dihydroxyacetone (DHA), which reacts with proteins as the skin's surface to turn them a colour roughly approximating brown. When those cells slough off in five to seven days, the tan goes tan.

Today's self-tanners are less DHA-loaded, but some Mavros still complain that applying there is too tricky. The sprays do tend to run, and the cream can look patchy on elbows and knees, plus applying self-tanner evenly all over your body is kind of tough—often. For the privacy and the unmet need, Victoria-based MyE Tan offers 130 bottles across Canada, where customers can pick down \$16 and ship inside an eight-light, waterproof self-applier to ensure three different positions and be sprayed by jets (DHA saturated car wash) for 18 seconds a pass—seven clothes. “Naked?” says

one person. “I more underneath. The spray gets into creases, never mind creases.” What about breathing the fumes of water-soluble dye, DHA and blue water? “We've had millions and millions of sessions and we've had no problems,” says MyE Tan's president of MyE Tan Canada. “There are no side effects available.”

There are plus sides to fake tanning available at upscale salons like The French Kiss in Toronto. There, for \$65 to \$120 a session, an aesthetician exfoliates or slathers a client with products like St. Tropez, “one of the best of the best Beverly Hills brands,” says co-owner Cristina Rada, who began her career in Romania as a mechanical engineer, to do the white body looks about 15 minutes and involves first exfoliating, then moisturizing and applying the self-tanner, and then buffing. “It is safe, safe, safe,” says Rada. It is also part as



essential as good old Vaseline. If the Goldfingers look OK over the past decade, brands like Revlon and Dior have either rebranded or put a bit of DHA (DHA) into their product a “tanning review.” And then there's the old-school tanning. “The difference now, compared to the 1990s,” says Hutchinson, “is that women use foundations

with a sun-kissed glow, it's because everybody wants to look healthy.” There are even tanning pills available on the Internet, though they haven't been approved in the U.S. or Canada. Neither—yet—is an institute being developed in Australia.

And just to be active for a minute, stars like Nicole Kidman and Brooke Shields both look as white as the day they were born, even while standing together as new-on-the-farm girls at Clint Eastwood's what about that? “Kidman looks fine,” says Hutchinson. “Shields?” “No white.”

BARBARA HIGHTON

parents to shield themselves from the sun, notes Kathleen Kimm, a toxicology professor at Trent University in Peterborough, Ont. Back then, if you showed up in public with a tan, you can be mistaken for a field hand, and women for a prostitute. "Tans were labour and sin," explains Kimm, "and not leisure time like they are today." In the early 1930s, "tan" therapy became popular and was prescribed for everything from fatigue to tuberculosis. Also in the '30s, fashion fortune Gisele Bündchen made a splash with her divine Golden Girl, complemented by the French Riviera. Baby oil hit the scene in the 1950s, and in '83 Cop people travelled in ocean-side to the land and one of the advertising world's most recognized trademarks—the little blond girl with piggyback and the cooler—sprayed tanning oil on her bathing suit.

Silver metallic UV reflectors were common on umbrellas by the late 1960s, and the '60s reflected in the sand-and-surf ethos epitomized by the Beach Boys. Then, the Mc Decade of the '70s gave rise to the tanning bed. A bronzed and peppy Farrah Fawcett gleamed from posters on the walls of every teenage boy. In '79, sun-myrior George Hamilton became the first actor to portray Dinosaur with a tan, in *Love At First Bite*. Also that year, Bo Derek scored a perfect 99 for tanning and other attributes in *10*. In the 1980s and '90s, tans took a hit, when the world looked up to realize the cancer cost over her heads was rising down industries.

But by the late 1990s, while many continued to be mindless of the sun's harmful effects, all seemed right again in celebrity land, particularly when Brad Pitt hit the scene. Soon afterwards Britney Spears and Jennifer Lopez appeared tanned and brown. Annette Bening of *Ami* friends. By 2003, spray booths offering quick tans took off. "They are like what sociologists call a signifier, or sign, because they have something that doesn't really mean what it means," says Kimm. "Unlike good posture, and appropriate weight, having a tan does not mean you're healthy—at all. It is the 'sign' of health, or myth of health, ruggedness, being outdoors, as well as a social sign."

SKIN CANCER is the most common type of cancer in Canada, accounting for one-third of all diagnoses of the disease, with 32,400 cases forecast for this year. There are three kinds: basal, squamous and

melanoma. Basal and squamous are less serious and far more common than melanoma, and will account for roughly 76,000 cases in 2008. They're usually most of without hospitalization. But the incidence of melanoma, with 4,400 diagnoses and 880 deaths projected for this year, has risen alarmingly—an average of 2.4 per cent a year in men and 1.8 per cent in women since 1992. Vancouver cancer agencies agree: since sun exposure is linked to most skin cancers, reduced exposure to ultraviolet radiation would cut the number of new cancer cases to the same extent that quitting

Sun suppresses the immune system. It works this way: dendritic cells with amoeba-like arms fight infections and are found in tissues throughout the body. They recognize and swallow the infectious agent and deliver it to T cells, which trigger an all-out attack on the infection and also stimulate the body against future attacks. The sun, however, "down regulates" dendritic cells, preventing their activation, says Shing-Shing Sheng, scientific director of the Institute of Infection and Immunity at London, Ont. "Dendritic cells are really the central mechanism of the immune re-



UV reflectors caught on in the '60s. Fawcett and Hamilton wore tanning beds; Derek wore a tanning bed.

sponding cells cancer in tobacco addicts. Deborah Koffler grew up in Ontario and spent a lot of summer growing herself, absorbed in baby oil, in cottage country north of Toronto. Koffler, 47, is an olive-skinned skin and generally didn't burn. Today, she lives in Bedford, N.S., and has had a year to think about an epidermal cancer. She had been keeping an eye on a spot on her back, just below her armpit and above her bikini line, for a few years when her family physician noticed it had grown. Koffler was in a race a special an hour a week, and a week after that, the dermatologist used a local anesthetic and removed the growth, which was about the size of a baby finger nail. Her prognosis: like any melanoma caught early—very good. "I always thought I was safe—I was afraid of the way I would tan—but I basically tell people there's not worth it," says Koffler. "Go a tan out of a bottle—you're a lot safer that way."

Sheng. "They control how the immune system will mobilize."

Recent research, however, suggests there's a flip side. It is as people get to get at least 85 minutes of unprotected exposure to sun a couple of times a week as the body can make enough vitamin D, which is used to combat cancers including breast, colon, ovarian and prostate. But a single study year even a few more rarely sufficient for making definite conclusions. It takes a substantive body of research, the kind that already exists and so clearly links sun exposure to skin cancer, says Langley. "Unfortunately, you've got conflicting scientific evidence that sun can generate skin cancer, and then you have all this soft science that has not been demonstrated in careful clinical studies. It's pretty misleading and can cause confusion about what people should do to the sun."

Meanwhile, the fact that melanoma shows the benefits of sunlight indicates exposure

should be to only 25 per cent of your body surface area, roughly meaning your hands, arms and face. "Most people get this going to and from their car, or to get groceries in the supermarket," says Dr. Jason Rivers, a professor of dermatology at the University of British Columbia and former medical director of the sun awareness program for the Canadian Dermatology Association. "That's much different from somebody lying on the beach for three to four hours with a bikini on."

The needs of today's sunbathers were seven decades ago, when we didn't know any better. Today, that's changed—or has it? Actually, the 1996 National Sun Exposure Survey, while dated, indicates we're slow learners. These aged 15 to 24 spend the most time in the sun and rarely protect themselves. That same survey found half of adults had at least one sunburn during the previous summer. Similarly, 45 per cent



Prioritarily told melanoma, caused by sun exposure, has risen alarmingly in Canada.

promise tanning, as one did it better. But John Moravski, product manager for sun care at Schering-Plough Inc., Cogent's corporate parent, says they're laying off the tanning market. "Honestly, we're not as taking the tanning product as well," says Moravski. "Our focus is protection."

UNDER A SCORCHING noonday sun in Toronto's Beaches neighbourhood, Jason Remenda, 34, indignantly pushes his 21-month-old son Jordan on a swing. Remenda, a parts manager for a Japanese car manufacturer, has a one-day off. He's wearing shorts, a baseball cap and a thick gold chain around his neck. His hair is a graying white, and the only 80% tan anywhere near him is on his face. It's his first time out this year, and he never sees summer. Thoughts of skin cancer cross his mind only when someone else has a tan. "I'm getting up there in age," jokes Remenda. "I'm

'I KNOW I MIGHT GET CANCER, BUT SOMETIMES YOU WANT TO LOOK GOOD NO MATTER WHAT'

of children under 12 had been sunburned at least once. Ron Seckley, the Montreal-based marketing director for UVShield this year, Health Canada took steps that will require manufacturers to label tanning beds with a warning label on tanning equipment.

Even when people get on tanning beds, they often don't put on enough to get the desired SPF rating. That's why Canadian dermatologists have used their recommendation of SPF 15 to SPF 30, says Rivers. "You can lead by example in a parent, so early education is important, sort of like the chicken," suggests Rivers. "If you introduce someone early, they get enough milk that they'll follow what you want them to do."

IT'S NOT ALL BAD NEWS. The tanning bed industry is under mounting pressure. In March, the World Health Organization—rating that more than two million cases of skin cancer, of which 133,000 are melanoma

most melanomas occur worldwide each year—issued a guideline to restrict artificial tanning with UV light to those 18 and older. Early this year, Health Canada took steps that will require manufacturers to label tanning beds with a warning label on tanning equipment.

There are safer alternatives to UV radiation. The spray-on tanning solutions are dihydroxyacetone, a plant-based dye that adheres to the outer layer of the skin. Dermatologists warn about it of reconstructive theologists, say that it's better than the tans, and the chemists say, according to both Rivers and Langley. The take-out is that, however, protect against the sun, so you still need a sunscreen. Melanoma is an in-house product. In 2004, the trade in dihydroxyacetone sold in tanning beds and large retailers was worth \$175 million in Canada, up 36 per cent from 2003, says Langley's Seckley.

Even Cogent's parent is changing. It used to

going to do a lot of skin cancer, right?"

A few feet away, lying on the sand along the north shore of Lake Ontario, Gibson Park or feels guilty for being caught out in the sun. The 24-year-old UV production assistant—fair-skinned, strawberry-blond and freckled—usually doesn't tan. But here she is, where not unprotected, although she says she's watching the time carefully. "I already know that I'll probably get skin cancer," says Fisher, explaining how she's burned through her life. Five years ago, she told a doctor 45 minutes of the sun and ended up with a blister all over her face. Her mother, who's already had skin cancer—twice. "That's why I feel I'm pretty much done."

It's the cry of a sun addict. Many of us, especially young people, just can't stay out of the sun, even though it could be the loss of death.

With News Photo by David Hargrave

MOJO STILL WORKING

Despite media sniping and injury, Argo Damon Allen has come back, big time

THE HIT THAT ALMOST ended Damon Allen's career was, by all accounts, a fluke. Late in the third quarter against the first-place Montreal Alouettes, Allen dropped back into the pocket and fired a pass through the drizzle to wide receiver Ray Miller. The pass let covered just as he let go of the ball, and Montreal defensive lineman Terry Stograve fell into him. Allen went down holding his left knee—wounded out he'd fractured his tibia—and the trainers helped him off the field.

As he stood in the tunnel under the lights of Mileux Stadium that Thursday night in August of last year, watching the dying minutes of a losing effort, the Argo quarterback had no idea on a pair of crutches, his knee wrapped thick with ice. The TDN camera zoomed in on his markedly discolored face. At 41, Allen was no spring chicken, and commentators lamented the possible end to his season, maybe even his career. He had been playing spectacularly, throwing a single interception in 221 attempts with a remarkable 62-per cent completion rate. He was already the all-time CFL leader in passing yards, a record he'd captured in 2000 when he passed

He wants the Grey Cup again, more than ever. In his 21st CFL season.



Hall of Famer Ron Lancaster's 90,553 yards. But this wasn't the way he wanted to end a year and a half earlier, the B.C. Lions had traded Allen away for a couple of draft picks, essentially telling him he was past his prime. Toronto waits a chance to prove otherwise—to prove a lot of otherwise.

Throughout Allen's career, he's taken as many less-than-stellar comments as he has from opposing teams. They've pointed to the fact that, like an author who's written dozens of books but not a single bestseller, he's never had a season that warranted the CFL's Most Outstanding Player award or even a league all-star nod. And he may reflect one week and brutal the next. His wife's a lawyer, they said. He was selfish at times, intimate and even dumb. His re-

laxed, cheerful nature was sometimes seen as a flaw. Despite his four offensive records, critics nailed him second-best to quarterback such as Lancaster, Doug Flutie and Matt Dunsmuir.

Ignoring the pundits, Allen and his coach, long-time friend Michael (Phil) Clement, had other ideas. "This guy is Gummy," says Clement. "Even when I knew the injury was serious, I still knew he could come back." Phil was right, of course. Doctors drilled a screw into Allen's broken leg, and he rehabbed for two months. And then he mirrored the Argo's in a Grey Cup victory, beating the team that had cut him off two years earlier. It was his fourth championship, and suddenly the 39-year veteran's under-rated career was cast in a different light.

IT'S A picture perfect May morning in Oakville, the affluent community west of Toronto where Allen lives with his wife, Denise, their three daughters, and one grandson. The Argo pivot, who took up golf 16 years ago, is bantering long drives at Glen Abbey's premier course while waiting for the club's head pro, Sean Coughlin, to give him a lesson. The first thing that strikes you when you meet the guy up close is how damn slight he is. At six feet and barely 185 lb., he must have a death wish to step on a field with 250-lb. linebackers who'd like nothing more than to grind him into the turf. Dressed in a long-sleeved black shirt like the kind Tiger Woods wears, a baseball cap and dark athletic pants, Allen's face remains so benign with. But he smokes a lot, a trait

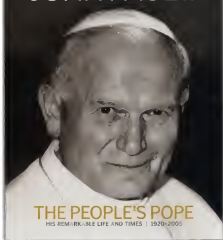
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that makes him almost immediately Mobile. Allen looms up a little midway through the quick, nine-hole round with Casey. "All though he's 42 now (murmur) and has the beginnings of grey spots above each ear, he's led at heart, playful and relaxed. Casey instructs him on something called "wing theory," and Allen's a good listener, applying what he learns with ease. "Damon knows golf is going to offer a challenge for the rest of his life," says Casey. "Some people settle for being okay. He wants to get better." Then he looks at Allen, smiles, and says, "You don't see that all the time in someone that old." Allen takes the ribbing well, breaks into a grin, and suddenly it seems the man just about 10 years. He finishes a long putt and giggles, does a little shimmy and loses another five.

Allen was born in San Diego, Calif., to a carpenter and a nurse, the third of five boys and a girl. His older brother by three years is Marcus Allen, one of the greatest running backs to play in the NFL. Damon started playing football in 1968. After an outstanding career at California State-Fullerton, where he set seven school records in his senior year, Allen caught the eye of a few NFL scouts. But not as a quarterback.

In 1984, African-American QBs were few and far between in professional football. He'd attend a camp, run the 40-yard dash in 4½ seconds, launch bullets downfield, huddle members after receiver, and then they'd ask "Do you play defensive back?" "If you were a good athlete they figured you could play another position," he says, admitting he still harbours some resentment for how blacks were regarded two decades ago. "They'd not question your physical talents at playing quarterback, they'd question your brain. It's upsetting when they tell you that position is reserved for a guy who's smart."

So in 1985 Allen headed north to the CFL, a pro league that had broken the colour barrier years earlier with the likes of quarterbacks Warren Moon, J.C. Wynn and Turner Gill. He signed with the Edmonton Eskimos and says he came to terms with not playing in the NFL the first day he stepped on the field. "I realized I was living the dream, playing professional football. The fact is we in Canada didn't dismiss it at all because this game is not easy to play."

Not easy in more ways than one. Allen has led a nomadic existence in the CFL,

playing on six different teams, hence his lack of a fan following. After three years in Edmonton, where he won his first Grey Cup, he signed a free-agent deal with the Ottawa Rough Riders after a contract dispute with the Eskimos from office. But in 1989, the Riders were a mess. Hobbled by a messiah and gripped with tragic failures, Allen was excited about finally being Number 1 on the depth chart. But when the Riders didn't



Allen comes in 2010 to inherit an existing yet unbroken passing record

get any better, fans and the press pointed the finger at the man behind the centre.

Over the next five years Allen played in Hamilton, Memphis and back again in Edmonton, where he won league titles. He won another cup before signing with the B.C. Lions in 1996. He took back to the CFL team for which he played longest with triumph—and some regret. The Lions made it to the Western Final in 2008 against the Calgary Stampeders, only to lose by two points. With a minute left in the game, Allen was on the verge of driving his offence within field goal range when he fumbled. "The next day in the paper, I remember it, it said, 'Damon loses.'" But he brushed the defeat aside.

And what a rebound. The following year, after 16 consecutive seasons, suddenly he was in the spotlight as people realized he was a few thousand yards away from being the center's all-time CFL passing record. On Oct. 28, against Hamilton, the team Lincum coached, Allen surpassed the mark. That year he also completed nearly 62 per cent of the balls he threw to lead the CFL with a career-high 43.0 yards, and even went on to win the third Grey Cup. But in sports, what you did then counts for only so much

Two years later B.C. sent Allen to Toronto. Something happens to athletes when they recognize they're short-tenured. They sever every moment and fight harder than ever for that extra inch. Reaching his 33rd season, Allen wants to make the most of the championship more than ever. Not as proof of his greatness. Not as vindication for the turbulent early years. He wants it for the team, he says, for the people playing next to him.

And he contemplates how he'll be remembered. He'd like to be thought of as one of the best. "Yeah," he says, "that's important to me." But Allen doesn't take that for granted. "There's a part of him that knows he's a phenomenal player who's had a phenomenal career," says Giersman. "But there's another part that's disappointed he hasn't gotten all the respect he deserves."

Maybe one more record will put the matter to rest for good. With 64,240 passing yards to his credit, Allen is 360 yards short of Warren Moon's pro-football passing record of 70,333, a benchmark the CFL/NFL great set over a 23-year career. He sits in second place, ahead of the greatest quarterbacks in the game in any league. If he plays out his final two years with the Argos injury-free, and can match his average yearly passing total of 3,200, he's got a shot at Moon's record. And if the breaks is, Allen will become the greatest passer pro football has ever known. "Will that answer any questions of respect?" He smiles. "I've said it before. No one will appreciate what I've done until I'm gone." It's his wrong, though. Damon Allen is getting his due now. And all it took was 20 years.

MR. G'S WILD RIDE

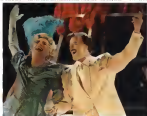
No longer a Broadway knight or Vegas king, Robert Goulet still loves the spotlight

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, Robert Goulet has a few things he would like to set straight. He did not, repeat not, "maim" *The Star Spangled Banner* at the Sony Lian (Muhammad Ali) match in 1965. He got one goddam word wrong—by the *damn's* early night instead of light. "Now whenever someone has a problem with it, it's like, 'Do you remember when Robert

Goulet wore lelele and scratched himself?'" La Marmelade is the better song, says, and, taping pencils of baritone, thunders out across a crowded burleson in midtown Manhattan to prove his point. Then there's the water from *The New Yorker* who misquoted him in a recent profile. Yes, there is a portrait in his sizable art collection—"a blond babe with a great face, great body, like a dress"—but he purchased because it reminded him of a dancer on his 1990s CBC television variety show. "It's he put in his story that I wanted to hang her. I never said that. I said I wanted to jump on her bones." Bang it "crash," explains the 75-year-old whose no-ocean romantic balladry often turns a musical theatre star and a Las Vegas legend. Jump on her bones is "usual." This writer, for once, looks forward to the correction.

But there is another point that "Mr. G" is putting particular emphasis on: he is "not in the habit" of kissing other men. Back on Broadway for the first time in almost a decade, playing the role of Georges, the less flamboyant half of the homosexual couple at the heart of *La Cage aux Folles*, this whole gay thing has him a bit rattled. (During our interview he asks about my marriage. Informed that I have a wife and child, he goes positively Strophil. "He doesn't bother me at all. I mean, I'm an independent. I like both

Democrats and Republicans, if they have something good to say, and do so.") The specific problem seems to be the curtain-dropping smooth he shares with his co-star Gary Beach. "You're doing very well with it all, darling." Vers, his agent, business manager and wife of 33 years parrs across the burleson table. Goulet, who wears he never can a homosexual until he was 25, and



On stage, in which he starred opposite Beach, was hailed as a triumphant comeback.

always thought Rock Hudson was "a man's man," looks grateful. "I'm really not comfortable," he says. "All the time I'm thinking about Sophie Loren." (Judging by the pucker, shoulder chucks, knee cups, and hearty neck rubs that Goulet bestows on Beach during their "tender" on-stage moments, the fellow actor doesn't have much to worry about.)

Not that audiences, or even the critics, care that much about his sensibility. With Bobby Goulet it's always been about the pipes. That bass profundo near that Frank Sinatra famously once described as being "as wide as Sophie Tucker's ass." "There

has caught up with the former heartthrob. The big blue eyes are more water than ice, the luxuriant hair and mussed-thriving and bushy blackened. He has a titanic hip, a pin in his thigh, and a wonky knee. His spine, from the second to the fifth lumbar, is bent into a C, and lower spots dot the backs of his hands. But that voice rumbles on. In conversation in an enclosed space it's like standing next to a jet engine. On stage, it's only dimmed above the chorus. He's still the only guy in the cast who doesn't need a smile to hit the back of the theatre.

When Goulet joined *La Cage* in mid-April, critics hailed it as a triumphant comeback. Mr. G was allowed the paper and TV, still for all even parodied him on *Saturday Night Live*. But the stereo rapin the space-time coronavirus was short-lived. In mid-June, the show won a Tony award for best musical revival. Two days later, the producers pulled the plug, citing half-filled houses and spiralling losses. It will go dark June 26. "It's not me," Goulet growls when I bring it up. "The show needs \$600,000 each week to break even. I kept it alive for a while, but they kept losing money." He had expected to be on Broadway until the New Year. There's no backup plan.

The audience at a Tuesday night performance at the Marquis Theatre is mostly grey, largely gay, and far from a self-righteous lap up the lush production numbers, signed with delight as Michael Scrimin Washington's empty performance as Jacob the butler/maid, and shower Goulet with affectionate applause. Backstage after the show, Nathan Lane, who played Albin in the Hollywood film version of *La Cage*, stops by to compliment Mr. G on how great he sounds. (Goulet, who has some trouble



recalling names, will later confab him with Nathan Hale, the agent that I have but one life to lose Revolutionary American pants!) Outside the Times Square stage door, two dozen fans wait for autographs, hug-and-phots. A young girl struggles up for a snapshot. "Goulden's going to love this," proclaims her camera-wielding mother. In the back of the stretch line on the way to his hotel, Goulden laments the doing. "It's funny how, kid," he sighs "it got 20 laughs I counted."

THERE WAS a time when Bobby Goulden was the Can't Miss Kid. A silly, vibrant, oil-haired Irishman who went from singing in his church choir in Edmonston (he was born in Massachusetts but moved to Alberta to live with his grandparents at 13, following his father's death) to a scholarship at Toronto's Royal Conservatory of Music. Then came the role in *Shaver's*, the country's most popular variety show. He shot to fame in the United States after landing the role of Sir Lancelot in the original 1960 production of *Camelot* opposite Richard Beron and Julie Andrews. JFK loved the show so much that he wrote part of his presidential myth. And Goulden created his biggest hit, *Over I Would Leave You*. His records topped the charts, he won a Grammy as best new artist, he sang on *The Ed Sullivan Show* 16 times. The phone was ringing off the hook with offers from Hollywood, and his press agent was boasting that these were the letters for a "pure star" like Bobby. "He can be photographed from any angle," Mike Marshall told *Madison* in 1962. "You don't have to build up his lip when he winks things. More than that, he's got great personal magnetism."

But the move from public and critics didn't agree. His first two films, *Homecoming* and *Over I Would Leave You*, tanked. A 1966 television series, *Like Light*, featuring Goulden as a debaucher, was fighting secret agents, lasted only a few weeks. He returned to Broadway and movie. Very pretty French Canadian (not much of a stretch—his father was Quebecois) in *The Happy Year*. Vegas came calling, and soon took a night at the Frontier between his bread-and-butter Ha-tiket to sub-superstardom.

That's the Robert Goulden many people remember. The wide-lipped singer with the retelling eyes, singing through a perpetual haze of cigarette smoke. The heavier-than-EtO-McMahon laughter who always seemed

to be on Johnny, Merv or Mike's couch. The ubiquitous guest star who might turn up on *The Love Boat*, *Playboy* or *After* on any given night. Las Vegas Extension of the Year in 1982—the year he turned his head wide. Well, a Vegas-don't-be-better-than-his at London's Playboy Club.

The new "family-friendly" Vegas doesn't have much room for its old seductress. Mr. G hasn't played since a while. His last show, *Robert Goulden: The Man and His Moon*, closed after only a few weeks in 2001. It lost more than US\$400,000 in a month. Goulden's



Goulden backstage in 1962 with Andrews was a big draw into the '70s.

much divorced plans to have his "own room"—six days a week, 90 weeks a year—in the new City by the Bay Resort here. When the dream here he built off a two-lane road on the outskirts of Vegas three decades ago, it was made in the middle of suburbs, now a 14-lane thoroughfare. Wayne Newton, the best man at their wedding, is still a neighbour. But so is Mike Tyson, and the pop impresario and convicted felon Stage King.

There were some high-profile movie roles in the late 1980s. *Survival*, *Twelve*, *Joe*, and playing a villain in *Old Joe*. Leslie Nielsen's *Naked* was signed. But in recent years, Goulden has made his living—a comfortable one to be sure—touring the States with revivals of Broadway classics like *South Pacific*, *Men of La Mancha* and *Camelot*. "You want me to be on my up and do nothing for

the rest of my life?" he says when the question of retirement is raised. "That's stupid." After all, there's a lot of life and money outside of New York, L.A., and San City. "I love Des Moines. It's a great theatre town. The audience are very sophisticated."

GOULET is out in the spotlight on stage at The Tower Hotel, dispensing his like. The venue's popular Broadway by the Year concert series is celebrating 1962, and Mike G is the surprise special guest. A story about getting harem-wild with the hard being Richard Beron, then losing him for the amusement of their *Camelot* colleagues, his monophoned into monophoned of tongue to his long-lost Julie Andrews' mouth. Now, suddenly, he's on to his host with promise career a decade ago, and the bewildering number of doctors who wanted to perform digital castration. "Don't go there, please don't go there," Vera whispers as we stand at the back of the hall.

That's just the way Bobby is. Ask about his life's peak of heights, and somehow it leads to him standing under a full moon in Arizona in his lower shorts. His supply of anecdotes is bottomless. And Vera—with her smooth skin, vermilion hair and diamond ring big enough to choke any one of those 10 cars—knows them all by heart, sharing in with details, using the most story-like kind of *filibustering* with your grandpa, except all the tales are slightly smutty and involve famous dead people. They are also frequently laugh-out-loud funny.

The audience is charmed rather than appalled. Goulden delivers a rather-mingling version of *Over I Would Leave You*. At the restaurant after the show, he'll grill you. The harem and burlesque dancers along with the piano player as we enter the room. He merrily says Will Ferrell a lesser thinking than for the impressionists. "You keep your name alive" with the kids. He's making a deal doing a Christmas album, and there's a song he's recording for Howard Stern's radio show. But it's being up stage that really matters. "I'm enjoying it. It makes me feel good," says Goulden. "The audience, when they laugh, when they applaud, that's what it's all about." He follows the waitress and orders a bottle of No. 283 from the wine list: *Caracas Highlands Chardonnay*. ■

JOANNE GIBSON/REUTERS/GETTY IMAGES



IGNORANCE ISN'T BLISS

By putting off trips to the doctor, men are risking their lives

I RECENTLY DEVELOPED an interest in my health. It was piqued by a PSA blood test that suggested my prostate-specific antigen levels were a tad too high. It became serious when a follow-up biopsy revealed a sizable tumour in my prostate gland. It became obsessive when I weighed the pros and cons of radiation therapy versus surgery.

The problem should have been caught earlier. It's not that I'd been ignoring my symptoms, more generally don't experience prostate cancer symptoms until the disease has spread, and previous conventional examinations had been negative. But other than visits for

occasional ailments, I hadn't made time to see my doctor for a proper physical exam in several years, and I'd never had a PSA test. If I'd prioritized much longer, the cancer would have spread, leaving me with very few options. Instead, following treatment, I'm cancer-free. Thank luck, really.

Doctor avoidance isn't rare among men. According to Statistics Canada, only 74 per cent of men saw a doctor in the last year, and a much smaller percentage had full physicals. The results are especially prevalent among younger men, but offenders are often middle-aged boomers like me who act like we're bulletproof. In fact, we're prone to a host of serious ailments. We shy away from medical care unless the problem becomes too obvious to ignore, and that leaves us vulnerable. Avoidance is such an epidemic that pay-per-view TV, a U.S. network that serves up a steady diet of CSI reruns, Pamela Anderson and wrestling, is using its allotted public service announcements to promote a medical awareness initiative for the business *Check Up or Check Out*. It can't be subtle, but it gets the point across.

So dole this out. One in seven Canadian men will get prostate cancer; one in 26 of us will die from it. One in 14 will get colorectal cancer, one in 18 will die from it. Prostate, colon, testicular and pancreatic cancers, fought only on bearded all, when caught too late, are cold-blooded killers. Yet by getting so even see a family doctor, too many men are killing the doc and putting themselves—and with their families—at risk.

This is strange because these are guys who, for the most part, would want to get regular preventive maintenance for their cars yet refuse to change the oil when it comes

to their own bodies. These are dads who want to see their kids graduate, husbands who want to grow old with their wives. And it isn't just health differences who fall into this category. Two male oncologists I know tell me they haven't had proper physicals in a decade. And they see the unfortunate victims of procrastination every day. Low-income men in the U.S. can make an expensive mistake—many have no health in-



surance. There's no such excuse in Canada. So what keeps men out of the rubber-gloved reach of physicians? Some might have language or cultural difficulties in dealing with the health care system. And physicians say too many boys are in the sports vernacular, to "play hurt" proceed into adulthood with the same outlook.

But the more common reasons are fear, denial and old-fashioned modesty. Men are especially prone to cancers in areas of the

body they don't like to talk about, even when dealing with family physicians. They are uncomfortable with the most basic test, the digital rectal exam, not to mention colonoscopies where patients are probed with a long instrument. And since most assessments for prostate cancer—the most common of male cancers—can leave men anguished and/or uncomfortable, a lot of guys decide they'd rather not look to fix what, no doubt, doesn't appear to be broken. "We know from surveys that men care about their health," says Dr. Alan Sa, a urologist at the University of British Columbia's Prostate Centre in Vancouver. "But a lot of them just don't seem to want to look at anything that might have a negative outcome, especially when it comes to their genitals and their erections."

The folks at the Vancouver centre intend a crusade between fear tactics and humor in an effort to raise awareness and convince men to get checkups. In 2004, the centre produced a public service TV ad in which an actor is seen treating a middle-aged man lying face down on an operating table. The doctor mutters a ticking time bomb, and with his prostate "checked" but everyone thought that was a funny—it can be seen air in the centre's website, but no formal TV networks have picked it up.

Doctors are too busy to chase reluctant patients, so men have to help themselves. It would be easier if men, like horses, talked more about our medical concerns, but in my experience, self-diagnosis of prostate cancer is a bad idea. Most guys who get prostate cancer on their own a bad idea: more complications. And men's health information groups barely exist; the converted, let alone the masses. That said, along the way in public help. I did a recent TVG news panel with two other prostate cancer sufferers, both fellow journalists, that elicited a flood of responses. And the point that really hit home for most respondents was this: by going to our doctors and treating our cancers early, we were still able to talk about it. ■

GOOD GOLLY MS. POLLY

After playing a series of flakes, Polly Shannon gets taken seriously in Hollywood

IN CANADA, she has quipped constant battle against getting typecast as a "ditz." Maybe that's because in her native land she's best known for playing a prime minister's flaky bride in the *Madama* miniseries and a wide-eyed actress in the movie *Mr. White*. Or that that's a good enough sport to pose in a bikini on a Malibu beach because *Madama* happened to be doing a cover story on tanning that week (she logs her agent in the dark about the purpose of the shoot). But in Hollywood, where she now makes her home, Polly Shannon is making a different sort of impression. She's just landed a plus role in ABC's *What About Brian*, an upcoming one-hour series from the producers of *Lost* and *Alias*. And she plays a pedantic oncologist, a seriously smart babe.

It might be easy to get the wrong impression about Polly Shannon. Over the phone, the 31-year-old Canadian actress is a gossamerly giddy. I keep asking her to repeat herself, because her answers keep dissolving into gales of laughter. And the questions aren't that funny. But behind the confident demeanor, you can sense a wellspring of determination that may explain how she's become a contender in a town that's a permanent American idyll contest for thousands of pretty, talent actresses.

Shannon is a *roughshaver*. "I run every morning, usually in a skirt," she says. "I'm obsessive-compulsive about my running. I've ruled 13 days in 12 years. There's a place here called Lake Hollywood, a reservoir, and it's 3.2 miles. So I just do this once." Because she's often driven to the set as early as 5 a.m., that means hitting the pavement at 3 a.m. When she was living in Toronto, she says, "I'd mowdown Bloor Street at three in the morning and I'd wear big baggy pants and my hair up in a bun. But I've had people recognize me on the street—get tagline home from bars while I'm going up."

Born in Kingston, Ont., Shannon was raised in Agincourt, Que., a suburb across the river from the nation's capital. Her father, Michael Shannon, is a doctor who now works in the private sector after serving in various senior posts at Health Canada, including director general for the Laboratory Centre for Disease Control. Her mother, Mary

Maday Smith, wrote children's screenplays for film and TV. After acting in theaters as a child, Shannon became a model at 13, with assignments that took her to New York, London and Tokyo. She launched her TV career in 1992, landing a part in *Canoe*, a TV series about a struggling rock band. Since then, her notable roles have included a schoolgirl who seduces Henry Cavill in *The Girl Next Door*, a model recruited to a commercial in *The Shallows* (Keanu Reeves)—and Margaret Trudeau. "Playing

'IF THEY have a quota of nudity to fill, then so why—I don't even have the boobs and the butt for that kind of job'

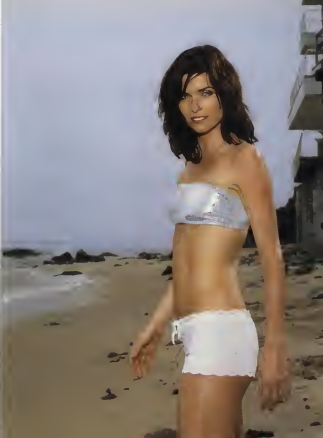
Madame was a really thrilling experience," says Shannon. "It was a challenge; this was different from anything else I've done."

The lesser challenges include repeat guest roles on episodic TV, such as *Therapist in the Dark* (1998) and *The Outer Limits*. And if you Google her name, the first few sites that come up include a gallery of nude photos from that series, with the accompanying caption—"Polly Shannon showing in her small, pert breasts while standing fully nude to a gay man his friend over her naked body." Shannon says she doesn't mind

showing her body onscreen when it feels appropriate. "I don't love it. It's an awkward thing to have to do. But it's for the right reason, then I'm all for it. It's because they have a quota of nudity they have to fill, then so why—but I don't even have the boobs and the butt for that kind of job."

As a literary doctor in *What About Brian*, Shannon may never have to consider boobie roles again, although the show is not without spice. "It's comes on at 10 o'clock at night," she says, when asked if it pushes boundaries. Brian is a thirtysomething guy who makes his living as a low-well-known friend's bestie. Shannon plays the fiancée. Since landing the part, she's been plagued with media attention. And after years of coming between Toronto and L.A., she's got a green card and appears to be settling in.

But she remains close to a broad community of Canadian actors working in L.A., including her boyfriend, Colton Hanks. They've been "seriously" dating for six months. Brian is "such a sweet, awesome, shy guy," she says, "but he runs into a monster onscreen. It's so weird." Brian has played a sex fiend in *Last Night*, a rapist in *Suspicious Rivers*, and a disordered dad in *Falling Angels*. "Showing my man in movies was really hard. But when the men hit, she said, 'He's so lovely.'" Then again, this model—a doctor's daughter who's going to play one on TV—knows that in her business appearances can be deceiving. ■



BACKTALK

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STRAIGHT TALK IN QUEBEC

The health minister didn't dodge the court's hot potato. How refreshing.

YOU'LL BE HAPPY TO KNOW the debate over private health care is over in Ottawa. It lasted about 47 seconds, and for a while there some of us were worried it might catch on. But we exhaled without the puerile genius of our current national leaders for being utterly unconvincant.

Within hours after a divided Supreme Court brought down a complex and reasoned decision that put the single-payer healthcare model on (here comes the obligatory medical pun) life support, Paul Martin said: "We're not going to have a two-tier health system in

this country. Nobody wants that."

It was such a perfectly little neurological bull that you could actually see the Prime Minister collapsing inward under the force of his own fatality when he spoke. For that brief, terrified screen was actually enough to make Martin the philosopher-king of this particular debate. Stephen Harper has clearly hoped that if he ignored health care it would go away since it refused to go away. Harper went away instead, leaving Peter MacKay to blame the Liberals for waiting lines.

So that's the news from the Liberal Van Pitt Richardson, whose



penicillin below, with Lucy's brother, this no problem is no bigger or complicated that it can't be run away from. Canadians hungry for leadership from their MPs may want to make a note with a side themselves over. Fortunately, the real action is elsewhere. The Supreme Court decision dealt with a specific case of excessive wait times in Quebec. It invalidated dispositions of Quebec provincial law. So it was a hot potato aimed straight at Philippe Couillard, Quebec's minister of health and social services.

The Supreme Court hasn't tried to judge it. We're not here to nominate the Quebec minister for sainthood, but in his determination to avoid hysteria and denial he's got the debate over health care reform off to a better start than any of us had a right to hope.

Plus, with the majority of the court, Couillard dismissed the idea that banning private participation from the health care

system is any measure of compassion in a society. "It is false and tendentious to establish a link between private-sector participation in the health care system and the degree of progressiveness of a society," he said the day after the court decision. "How can you claim that societies like France, England or Sweden are less socially advanced than Quebec on the basis of private-sector participation in their health systems? It's easy to see this makes no sense. The issue divides countries themselves over private participation in their health systems. As far as I know, nobody accuses them of being socially backward."

Couillard isn't ripping his hair out yet about what changes he'll make to Quebec's health system. He plainly doesn't know. He has asked the Supreme Court for a delay of several months to implement the decision so Quebec's government can plan its next steps. But his comments, day after day in

the National Assembly, repeatedly emphasized the importance of calm and perspective. It was the opposite of the daily theatre of indignation to which we are subjected in Ottawa.

Two things help Couillard. First, his party was well-positioned for the shock of the Supreme Court decision by being a long-ago leader. Jean Charest, who has been much more careful than Paul Martin not to put himself into any ideological corner on health care, "We believe in a public health system within which the private sector can play a role," Charest told the National Assembly within minutes after the top court handed down its decision. "That is, literally, word for word, the position we have defended for as long as I have been leader of the Liberal Party of Quebec."

Compare and contrast that with the sad fate of Pierre Pettigrew, the former federal health minister whose boss sent him out to apologize after he said more or less the same thing last year ("If some provinces want to experiment with the private delivery system, my view is that as long as they respect the single-payer, public payer, we should be examining these efforts").

Couillard's other asset is that he was a neurosurgeon before he entered politics. You may not actually have to be a brain surgeon to understand Canada's health care system, but it probably helps.

His mind lingers and his even keel had observers talking about Couillard as a replacement for Charest almost as soon as he entered Charest's cabinet in 2003. The minister has already pulled up a big victory in the Quebec government's internal funds he made Charest change his mind about the location of a new research hospital for the Université de Montréal. "The question isn't so much whether he will replace Jean Charest one day," Michel Doudou wrote the other day in *Le Devoir*. "It's when?"

For comment: backpage@mcgill.ca
Read Paul Wells's weblog, "Behind Wells," at www.mcgill.ca/pwells



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T O M C R U I S E

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